

The *SBJT* Forum: “In the Beginning...”

Editor's Note: Readers should be aware of the forum's format. D. A. Carson, Kirk Wellum, Todd L. Miles, Terry Mortenson, and C. Everett Berry have been asked specific questions to which they have provided written responses. These writers are not responding to one another. The journal's goal for the Forum is to provide significant thinkers' views on topics of interest without requiring lengthy articles from these heavily-committed individuals. Their answers are presented in an order that hopefully makes the forum read as much like a unified presentation as possible.

SBJT: In any complex debate, it is not long before there are “hidden” elements in the discussion, i.e., elements that are gumming up the integrity of debate because one side or the other fails to recognize their existence and significance. What “hidden” elements are there in current discussions over science and origins?

D. A. Carson: I shall mention three, and then offer a concluding reflection.

(1) Considerable confusion exists over what a biblically faithful understanding of the relationship between God and the created order ought to be. Consider three possibilities. (a) In an *open* universe (not to be confused with “open theism”), God interacts openly with the created order. Everything that takes place in creation takes place because of the explicit control that God exercises. The only determination of any event is the will of God, directly and immediately controlling everything. It is difficult to distinguish “miracle” from any other event, because God stands immediately behind *every* event; equally, it is almost impossible to envisage what “science” might be, for everything is immediately traceable to the mind and will of God. Moreover, this way of looking at things often leads to fatalism.

The only “cause” of anything is the immediate will of God. (b) The direct opposite of the first option is the *closed* universe. By this I mean that everything that happens in the universe is caused by other things in the universe. There is no outsider, and certainly no God who reaches in and controls things. Cause and effect take place within the closed order of creation. Obviously, science is not only possible, it is the only rational way to try to understand sequences of events, whether in history or in the physical order more broadly. (c) An alternative to both is the *ordered and controlled* universe. Here everything that happens takes place within God's control: not a bird falls from the heavens, Jesus reminds us, apart from God's sanction. Paul tells the Ephesians that God orders all things according to the counsel of his own will. Yet God normally does things in a regular way. That is precisely why science is possible. God has created all things in a certain way, and ordains things to interact with one another in a regular and particular fashion. But God does not then step away from the created order and simply let things take their course. He continues to be in charge, and nothing occurs apart from his sanction. The biblical writers know of the water

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cycle: Qoheleth, for instance, knows of rain that falls on the land, forms streams and rivers, returns to the sea, is evaporated into the skies, and falls again as rain. But the biblical writers' knowledge of the water cycle does not prevent them from preferring to say that God sends the rain. All of the physical phenomena bound up with the water cycle are ordered by God. They are regular, analyzable, measurable. Science is thus not only possible, but a means of discovering how God *regularly* does things through means he himself has established and ordered, and which he continues to control. On the other hand, nothing prevents him from doing something very unusual, quite outside the regular ordered array. That is what we call a miracle, and, precisely because such an event does not follow a regular pattern, science is unlikely to have any useful or accurate explanation. Moreover, this side of the resurrection we may rightly insist that it is Christ himself who upholds all things by his powerful word; Christ is the mediatorial king, i.e., all of God's sovereignty is mediated through him until the end of the age (1 Cor 15). He is the One who orders and controls all things, even if most things in his watchcare are so regular in their operation that science is a great gift for uncovering this order.

These three are not the only possible patterns for thinking of the relationship between "God" and "the universe." My point, in any case, is simple: all sides often bring certain assumptions about this relationship to the table, and rule certain arguments out of order simply because they cannot see beyond their assumptions.

(2) Two views of what science is are battling to prevail in the public square. Although the two overlap, the first is more

narrowly methodological than the second. The first asserts that science is tasked with understanding as much as possible of the physical order, using the time-tested tools of careful observation, measurement, controlled experiments that can be replicated, deploying testable hypotheses that win consensus or are modified or overturned by subsequent advances, and so forth. The second view of what science is adopts all the methodological commitments of the first, but adds a philosophical commitment: science in this second view steadfastly refuses to allow into the discussion, at any level, any appeal whatsoever to anything supernatural.

In the present atmosphere, these two views of science can often be distinguished by how they respond to the best of the intelligent design arguments. While remaining rigorously scientific *within its own definition of science*, the *first* view can envisage the possibility that the proponents of intelligent design may be on to something. The best of the arguments for "irreducible complexity" attempt to introduce such mathematical rigor into *known* physical processes that they can be distinguished from the "God of the gaps" errors so egregiously common among nineteenth-century figures. These scientists may want to tread cautiously to be sure that no surreptitious "God of the gaps" arguments are being smuggled in, but they cannot see anything *necessarily* wrong with the physical world bearing witness to its Creator. At very least, the matter is worth further scientific probing. By contrast, scientists who implicitly or explicitly adopt the *second* understanding of what science is will insist that even the best arguments for intelligent design are *necessarily* unscientific. There *cannot be* any connection between scientific method and

possible implications outside the material order, as there cannot be any appeal beyond the material order to explain what takes place within that material order.

The links between this latter view and the “closed universe” of the previous point are pretty obvious. One might therefore think that everyone who adopts this second view of science is necessarily a philosophical materialist, perhaps an atheist, yet quite clearly this is not the case. Some scientists who are sincere Christians adopt this second view of science, but think that God-talk inevitably describes God’s relationship with the universe in non-scientific terms, i.e., in another dimension, or with other categories. Science and theology become alternative but mutually exclusive ways of describing reality.

The tensions intrinsic to this position are considerable, for transparently biblical Christianity insists that God has disclosed himself not only in private ways to particular individuals, but also *in the public arena of history, in the material space-time universe*. The cardinal instance, of course, is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If a person does not accept the real but miraculous nature of this event, it is difficult to see how he or she can be a Christian at all. But if one accepts the facticity of this event as described in the Scriptures, then one necessarily allows that there are at least *some* occasions when the supernatural God interacts with the material universe in ways that transcend what science *can* treat. As Carl F. H. Henry once asked Karl Barth in an open Q & A, “Was the resurrection of Jesus Christ the sort of event that could have been recorded by contemporary news media had they been present?” If one says no, one abandons the biblical record: after all, the tomb was

empty, and the resurrected Jesus had the tell-tale wounds, was seen and touched, and ate with his disciples. If one says yes, then one abandons the second definition of science *at least in this instance*, for scientific observation could observe in principle the phenomenon of the resurrected Christ *without being able to allow it because it defies “scientific” (under this definition of “science”) explanation*. The tension is palpable. If one chooses to live with it in the case of the resurrection of Jesus, why not allow it in some other events? For obviously this argument could be extended to other great revelatory moments, and ultimately to *creatio ex nihilo* (After all, how far can any Christian reasonably push even the most speculative theories of an infinitely repeating expanding and contracting universe?).

But my point is at the moment a simpler one: Very often conflicting definitions of “science” lurk behind the intensity of our debates.

(3) Hermeneutical discussions regarding the opening chapters of Genesis often hide another set of assumptions. We might get at this challenge by thinking our way through an example. Someone might argue (Indeed, many have argued!) that the Hebrew word for “day” always refers to a solar day when it is modified by an adjectival number. So when Exodus 20 tells us that the Lord created the heavens and earth in “six days,” the nature of the day (it is argued) is settled. Let us for the moment grant the validity of this argument without further dispute or refinement. The next phase in the discussion often revolves around whether Genesis 1 is prose or poetry, with the assumption that this is equivalent to asking whether it is history or imaginative, metaphorical description. At this juncture

one encounters lengthy debates over the nature of Hebrew parallelism and its place in poetry, over the possible relation between the terminology of this passage and the terminology of other creation accounts in the Ancient Near East, including *Enuma Elish*, and so forth. But one of the possibilities is rarely probed very far. Some have argued that this description really is given in terms of solar days, that the account is very much in terms of a “creation week,” that it is wrong to think of each day being a symbol for an age (as in the “day-age” theory)—but that this does not itself mandate a young earth or a literal week-long creation, because, it is argued, the creation week is itself a creative representation of what happened with its own theological purposes, but not a “scientific” or “historical” representation of what happened.

If this argument were admitted to have any plausibility, then of course all the evidence in the world that the days of creation are solar days is irrelevant to the debate. The question of literary genre becomes far more central—and it is far more difficult to adjudicate. Sadly, its difficulty is exploited by both sides. The conservative side sometimes treats appeals to literary genre as mere excuses for unbelief; the liberal side sometimes appeals to the literary genre of Genesis 1 as if astonishing minimalism is mandated by the text itself. But once again, my point is the simpler one: on all sides of this discussion, very often hidden elements gum up the quality of the discussion.

And that brings me to my final reflection. Thirty-five years ago, Francis Schaeffer wrote a little book that I have often found useful in helping some Christians move beyond entrenched positions. That book was called *Genesis in Space and Time*

(London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1972). He asked, in effect, a simple question: What is the least that Genesis 1-11 must be saying for the rest of the Bible to cohere, for the rest of the Bible to make sense and be true? That is not the same as asking what is the *most* that one can reasonably infer from these chapters. Rather, it is one particular application of the old *analogia fidei* argument: the appeal to “the analogy of the faith” as established by the rest of the Scriptures is one crucial way to let Scripture interpret Scripture.

SBJT: What important things do we learn from the biblical doctrine of creation?

Kirk Wellum: The importance of the doctrine of creation is crucial to understand, if we are to grasp the richness of the biblical storyline from beginning to end. Zooming out as far as we can go, the biblical story can be divided into four main parts: (1) Creation, (2) Fall, (3) Redemption, and (4) Re-creation. Immediately, it should be apparent that this breakdown does not proportionally represent the overall distribution of the biblical material. In one sense, the creation of the heavens and the earth and the sinful rebellion of humankind is presented by the time we get to the end of Genesis 3, and the rest of the Bible is primarily taken up with God’s plan of redemption that reaches its fulfillment in the unveiling of the new heavens and new earth at the end of the age. However in another sense, these four themes, including creation, are intricately woven throughout the Bible from start to finish. Even where these themes are not explicitly mentioned, they are implicitly informing everything that is taking place. Due to their foundational nature, mistakes in any of these areas have serious

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and widespread implications for how we understand the Christian faith. This is not only true with regard to redemption but it applies to the doctrine of creation as well. Creation sets the stage for everything that follows in the Bible and it carries the story along in ways that might not be obvious on the surface. If we miss what God is revealing about himself as the sovereign Creator, ourselves as creatures made in his image, the world that he made good and for his glory, and Jesus Christ as the Lord of creation, the biblical message is lost, or at least, severely distorted. Since we possess the whole biblical canon, we often forget that Genesis was written long after the events that it describes took place and that it was written for the Israelites after they were rescued from Egypt and formed into a nation. God went to all this trouble because the Israelites needed to know the information contained in Genesis, including the creation account, if they were to make sense of what he was doing. In a similar way, we need to have a solid grasp of this material if we are to understand God, ourselves, the world around us, and the salvation that is found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, the biblical doctrine of creation establishes the glorious character of God. He is not one God among many, a mere local, tribal deity. Rather he is the true and living God, the Lord of heaven and earth. He is the source of life and he is completely self-sufficient. He did not create to meet some lack in himself as if he needed something to do, someone to talk to, or someone to love. He created for his own good pleasure that he might reveal his magnificent splendor. More than just the great architect of the universe, he is the King of creation. But we should never think of him as aloof and distant because

of his transcendent royalty since the Bible tells us that he is intimately involved with his creation continually upholding, sustaining, and governing all things by his powerful word. He has graciously chosen to enter into a covenant relationship with his believing people whom he has chosen in his Son before the foundations of the world. In short, there is no God like this God! He is truly awesome and full of majesty, glory, wisdom, power, beauty, and skill. Consequently, he is worthy of our love, obedience, and worship. He will win the battle against sin and Satan who has rebelled against him. We can count on him to keep all his promises. We can trust him no matter what happens in human history, in our personal lives, or in the life of the church.

Second, the biblical doctrine of creation also tells us something about ourselves as human beings. We did not evolve from impersonal matter. Rather, we were created by God and, as such, we are creatures who are dependent upon him and responsible to him. We are not little gods around whom the world revolves, but neither are we insignificant. In fact, our real significance is found in our identity as creatures specially made by God in his image and likeness. This is our glory and the source of our true dignity, and we get into trouble whenever we forget our origins and attempt to live contrary to this reality. When this happens we lose touch with who we are and mistakenly redefine ourselves as sophisticated animals who sit on top of the food chain, or as human machines, or bundles of unruly hormones, or even as animated microprocessors. This is devastating on many levels because our identity as God's creatures grounds our ethical and moral responsibilities in his righteousness and establishes our role as

the stewards of his creation who operate under his authority. Furthermore, it is only when we view ourselves as God's creatures that we begin to see that something is terribly wrong with the human race, which superficial treatments cannot fix. Against the backdrop of our original glory, we see that our problems run so deep that only redemption that ultimately results in complete re-creation can set us back into a proper relationship with God.

Third, the biblical doctrine of creation tells us something about the world we inhabit. Put simply: the world made by God has significance. In the beginning, God pronounced a seven-fold blessing on all that he made. This means, among other things, that the world has real value. Therefore, we must not exalt the spiritual over the physical or vice versa; both are important and, in the end, God will redeem the material and immaterial components of our humanity so we can enjoy him in glory forever as whole human beings. The fact that God created and sustains the universe also grounds scientific inquiry. We do not live in an "open" universe where we are subject to capricious, unregulated, and arbitrary elemental spiritual forces, nor a "closed" universe that God cannot enter and in which he is not permitted to operate. Instead we live in a "controlled" universe where God regulates all things according to laws that he has established and yet reserves the right to act differently as he sees fit. This last perspective makes it possible for us to do science and at the same time to pray to our heavenly Father. Consequently, we can simultaneously think God's thoughts after him because of the regularity he has established and call upon him to intervene in supernatural ways without being intellectually incon-

sistent.

Fourth, the doctrine of creation has implications for our understanding of the gospel that is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine of creation is both theocentric and profoundly christocentric. As the biblical story unfolds and we move from the Old to the New Testament, we find that Jesus stands at the center of creation and fulfills Old Testament revelation in wonderful ways. His transformation of the doctrine of creation is introduced in the Gospels, elaborated on in the epistles, and comes to its grand conclusion in the book of Revelation.

In the Gospels, Jesus heals the sick, exercises power over the winds and the waves, and even raises the dead, among other things. He is being presented as someone who has the power to restore the order and harmony of the created realm, which has been disordered by sin. John 1:1-18 tells us that Jesus is the Word who became flesh; the same Word who was there with God in the beginning, the Word who is God and through whom God made all things (recalling Gen 1:1). He is life and his life is the light of men. Jesus is the Lord of creation.

In the epistles, Jesus, the Son, is said to be the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation (Col 1:15). This grand assertion has far-reaching implications for both creation and redemption. It means that Jesus is the point of contact between God and the creation without in any way diminishing his deity. Characterizing Jesus as the "firstborn" speaks of his pre-existence and his supremacy over all things as the unique Son of God. The fact that he is "the image of the invisible God" in a way that surpasses all others means that he is able to restore the divine image that was so severely defaced in human-

kind. As the “firstborn over all creation” he also transforms our understanding of the creation mandate to have dominion over the earth by his humble obedience that was willing to go to the cross to secure our salvation.

Furthermore, in Col 1:16-20 we are told that all things were created with reference to him and in relation to him (all things created *in* him), that he is the agent of creation (all things created *through* him), and the goal of creation (all things created *for* him). He is before all things and in him all things hold together. In addition to God’s fullness dwelling in him, he has accomplished a universal reconciliation by making peace through his blood shed on the cross. In other words, the very unity and purpose of the cosmos is bound to Jesus Christ. There is hope for believing sinners and life beyond death because of him. There is a new beginning and a new creation.

This hope is experienced personally in the new birth and in the Christian community as an outpost of the world to come, and one day in the entire cosmos. In Rom 8:18-25 Paul speaks about the creation waiting in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. According to Paul, the creation is subjected to frustration so that it is not able to fulfill its purpose apart from the intervention of God in Jesus Christ.

Finally, at the end of the New Testament, the last two chapters of the book of Revelation describe the new heaven and the new earth that will appear after the first heaven and the first earth have passed away. Using a series of metaphors, the glory of the new creation is described. It is a new city, a new Jerusalem, a bride beautifully dressed for her husband, and a brilliant jewel. It is also portrayed as

a measured and secure city without a temple, that does not need the light of the sun or the moon for the glory of God gives it light. It is an open, yet pure, city for the nations with a garden in the center, the river of life, the tree of life, and no more curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb are there, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night, and they will walk in the light of the Lord and reign forever and ever. So here, at the end of the Bible, the creation is renewed and purified from every vestige of sin through the work of Jesus Christ.

This brief survey is enough to show that the doctrine of creation is woven throughout the Bible from beginning to end. It is not an incidental doctrine nor it is something that we can ignore, distort, or re-interpret according to the whims of the surrounding culture. We must study, believe, and work out the entailments of what God has said about his creative activity if we are to understand him, ourselves, our world, and the riches of his glorious grace.

SBJT: What is the importance of the creation account to systematic theology?

Todd L. Miles: It is a statement of the obvious that the best place to start, when seeking to understand the Bible, is the beginning. But too often, the obvious is forgotten! When the beginning of the biblical story is ignored, our ability to answer life’s ultimate questions is severely diminished because systematic theology is only as good as the biblical theology that undergirds it. For this reason, the creation account is primarily valuable, not because it offers a rich source for systematic inquiry (though it

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does), but because it provides the true and divinely inspired beginning to human and redemptive history. Everything in the drama of redemptive history flows from the beginning—Creation. The creation account must therefore be read in light of its place in the overall story, including the fall of man, promises to the patriarchs, granting of the covenants, establishment of Israel, exile, promise and anticipation of the Messiah, the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and the inauguration of his Kingdom, the creation of the church, the promise and anticipation of the return of Christ, the consummation of the Kingdom, and recreation. Further, ignoring the creation account essentially guarantees that our understanding of these events will be diminished or confused with the sure result that our biblical and systematic theology will suffer.

The creation account begins with the statement that God created the heavens and the earth, that is, God created everything (Gen 1:1). Before anything else existed, God was there. The first verse of the Bible establishes the Creator-creature distinction, a critical and foundational tenet to the biblical worldview. Assuming Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, Genesis was delivered to the children of Israel prior to their settling of the Land. How the tribes of Israel must have been encouraged by the knowledge that as the Creator of all, God enjoyed absolute authority over all that is in creation! Their God, the Lord who made a covenant with them at Sinai, was not only distinct from his creation, but was supremely greater than the gods of the pagan nations that would surround them. When the Creator-creature distinction is ignored, theological systems and conclusions will inevitably

go sideways. Theologies that are pantheistic and panentheistic are fundamentally opposed to the Christian worldview at the most basic level.

The sovereign Lord who created by the Word of his mouth and his Spirit (Gen 1:2-3; Ps 33:6) did so in an orderly fashion. Nine times in the first chapter of Genesis the words, “according to its kind,” are repeated. The creation narrative affirms that there is an order and purposiveness that exists in the world. Worldviews and theologies, such as evolutionism and naturalism that deny this intentional supernatural order cannot be reconciled with the Christian worldview. God repeatedly declares that what he has made is “good” (Gen 1:4, 9, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). From the first page of the Bible, the material creation of God, including the human body, is defined as good. The delegated stewardship of creation given to humanity, the resurrection of Christ, the promised resurrection of the saints and the restoration of creation make perfect sense in light of the creation account. Such duties and events would make no sense if a spirit-body dualism prevailed. There is simply no room in Christian theology or practice for any moral bifurcation of the soul and body.

Mankind is distinct from all creation because it and it alone is created in the image of God. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is made possible due to the reality of this teaching in the first chapter of Genesis. Interpretations vary as to what it is to be created *Imago Dei*. An explicit definition of the term is not provided in the creation account, most likely because the term resists a simple definition. Errors are often made in reducing the *Imago Dei* to one thing or another. Genesis 1 and the rest of Scripture do unpack the crucial

truth of man and woman created in the image of God.

In the ancient near East, kings or magistrates would often erect an image to demonstrate that their rule extended to the limits of the location of the image (cf. Dan 3:1ff). The purpose of the image was to make visible the invisible original. Man is said to be created in the image of God and this surely has much to do with *representing*. This is an awesome responsibility! There is a basic level at which all humanity represents God. Regenerate believers have even greater capacity to do so. The Christian must not only represent God, but with maturity in faith, the believer is given greater capacity and responsibility to make Christ visible to the world (Col 3:9-10; Eph 4:20-24). Genesis 1:28-30 also demonstrates that there is a *functional* aspect to image bearing. Dominion over God's creation is fundamental to image-bearing. Dominion points to a stewardship, protecting the relationship for which one is responsible. It is a delegated service, for the good of those over whom responsibility is given. There is a purposeful intention for the human race that is continuous with the creative purpose of God. The stewardship is given to all, but the success or faithfulness in performing the duty is variable. The implications for this aspect of image-bearing include issues surrounding dominion. Environmental decisions, exploitation of resources, economic issues, the cultural mandate, and even the treatment of animals have to be informed by the creation narrative and the duties vested to humanity therein.

Humans, created in the image of God, have been granted all that is necessary to successfully image God in the world and carry out the duties of representing the invisible God. There is therefore a *substan-*

tival aspect to *Imago Dei* that encompasses the essence and structure of the image of God in man. It involves individual personhood and includes such things as knowledge, abilities, and capacities. The structure of image includes both the material and the immaterial. Being created in the image of God grants man a fundamental glory as well. The implications for the structure of the image of God in man are great. The dignity of all humans, regardless of station or condition, is affirmed. It is on the basis of this dignity that the biblical writers prohibited murder and slander (Gen 9:6; James 3:9). Protection, quality, and treatment of life convictions must therefore be rooted in the creation narrative. Debates and decisions surrounding abortion, treatment of the terminally ill and elderly, world hunger, prison conditions, welfare reform, etc., must be informed by the creation account.

That God created humanity as male and female (Gen 1:27) demonstrates that the image of God is not only individual but is *corporate*. Though not proving the Trinity, the creation narrative certainly allows for the doctrine. It is clear that the creation of the first man and first woman demonstrates a capacity and need for relationship. Implications for this aspect of the image of God in man include issues surrounding the need for companionship, community, and fellowship. Interaction between the sexes, role differentiation, and marriage relationships must be grounded in the teaching of the first two chapters of Genesis. The Lord God declared at the beginning, "It is not good that man should be alone" (Gen 2:18). Isolation is not good. Prisoners, the elderly, and orphans need visitors and comfort (James 1:27). Children need affirmation and the opportunity to interact in

a safe environment with their peers. The fact that God met the relational needs of Adam by creating one like him but not the same as him is of critical importance when discussing issues surrounding homosexuality and same-sex marriage.

Anyone who is paying attention realizes that recent advances and discoveries in science and technology have placed humanity in an ethical quandary. Indeed, in many cases, science has outpaced our ability to make ethical decisions. It has always been the case that humanity's greatest need is to hear from God. But now the penalties for not listening are catastrophically high. When the Word of God is ignored and/or despised, we place ourselves in a position where we do not have the wherewithal to answer the questions that beset our culture. The creation account begins the biblical story. When the creation account is denied or ignored, the biblical story loses its foundation, and systematic and ethical conclusions are inevitably diminished or distorted.

SBJT: What advice would you give pastors to help them prepare their congregation (specifically their youth) for what they face in the public school system which is thoroughly committed to an evolutionary worldview?

Terry Mortenson: First of all, you must teach people in your church (especially the youth) what a worldview is. They need to understand that it is a set of assumptions that every person has about certain basic questions of life. For example, is there a God or not? If so, what is He like and what is His relationship to the physical universe? What is the universe (an illusion or reality, orderly and predictable or random and chaotic, infinite and eternal or finite, etc.)? What is man (just an ani-

mal, unique from animals, related to God or not, basically good or inherently sinful, etc.)? Is there such a thing as absolute truth? Can we know truth, and, if so, how can we know it? Is there right and wrong in an absolute sense or is all morality a matter of opinion or majority vote?

Biblical Christianity answers these questions one way. The evolutionary view that dominates our culture and public education is humanistic and atheistic and answers them in a very different way. The Christian's answers should come from the Bible. Unfortunately, many people in the church live their daily lives unconscious of the fact that they are actually influenced by the evolutionary humanist worldview more than they are by the worldview they profess to believe at church. So we must inform people about what a worldview is and how it affects our decisions and relationships.

Second, pastors must clearly teach their people what the Christian worldview is. It is my studied conviction that many people who write or speak on this subject today do not have a fully biblical worldview. That view must start with taking Genesis 1-11 as literal history. Those chapters reveal very important truths about the nature of God, the nature of the creation, and the nature of man, and how they relate to each other. It also tells us that the world is not now the way it was originally created. The whole creation has been ruined by sin and death. Those early chapters of the Bible also begin to reveal the solution that would eventually be provided by Jesus Christ.

If the early chapters of Genesis are not giving us true history (if those chapters are mythology or symbolic poetry), then the whole foundation of the Christian worldview is false and the superstructure

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of the gospel and the Bible's teaching about how we are to live and what we should expect for the future also collapses into nothing more than wishful thinking. Jesus and the apostles all took those chapters as literal history, and so must we.

Third, pastors need to equip their people to defend the Christian worldview. That means teaching them apologetics—preparing them to give reasons for why they believe what they believe, to give a humble defense of the biblical worldview and the gospel on which it is built, when they are confronted with objections. Many Christians know *what* they believe, but they do not know *why* and they cannot explain to a non-believer why he should believe the Bible and turn from his sin and trust in Christ. There are many apologetic questions that Christians, especially young people, need to be able to answer, such as how we know the Bible is the Word of God and why it is reasonable to believe that Jesus rose from the dead and that miracles in the Bible really happened.

But the greatest apologetic challenge facing the church today is evolution and the idea that the earth is millions of years old. Christians all over the world are confronted with evolutionary brainwashing in the schools, media, museums, and national parks. Every Christian needs to have answers for questions like, how do you fit dinosaurs into the Bible? Do not natural selection and mutations prove evolution? Who was Cain's wife? What about radiometric dating and the geological evidence that the earth is millions of years old? Can we fit the Big Bang theory into Genesis? Was Noah's flood global? Were the days of creation literal days?

There are good answers for these questions and true science confirms the

biblical teaching regarding each answer. But most Christians, especially youth, do not know the answers. To start to equip lay people and youth, I would highly recommend these resources (all available at www.answersingenesis.org):

- The DVD "Genesis: Key to Reclaiming the Culture" explains that the truths of Genesis are key to understanding and responding to the moral and spiritual crisis facing America.
- *Evolution Exposed* is a book every Christian public high school student should have. In it Roger Patterson (a former public high school science teacher) documents the enormous amount of false information regarding evolution in three leading textbooks used in public high schools. For each point he shows the students where (on AiG's web site or in literature that AiG sells) the students can find the biblical and scientific refutation of the evolutionist claims. It will equip home-school and Christian-school students also.
- Adults and junior and senior high kids will be equipped in the award-winning "Answers Academy," a 13-week course that includes thirteen 30-min DVD lectures, a 200-page teacher's manual and 90-page student workbooks. This will greatly help people understand the crucial difference between facts and interpretations of facts and the anti-biblical philosophical assumptions used by evolutionists to make those interpretations.

Finally, encourage people in your church to visit the AiG web site, which has over 5000 articles with biblical and scientific answers to just about any question you would have related to creation and evolution. There you will also get a brief virtual tour of AiG's world-class Creation Museum, opening May 28, 2007, which will powerfully demonstrate that true science confirms the literal truth of Genesis and will challenge people with the gospel that is based on that true history.

We are in a battle for the truth and Peter tells us in 1 Pet 3:15 that we need to be ready to give an answer to the unbeliever. Apologetics is absolutely essential to produce strong Christians who can stand in the relentless evolutionary assault and who can effectively witness to people who have been brainwashed with the lie of evolution. The literal history of the early chapters of Genesis is absolutely foundational to a Christian worldview. To ignore them and compromise with evolutionary thinking is to have a less-than-fully-biblical worldview.

SBJT: How does the doctrine of creation help us in forming a biblical-theological understanding of human sexuality?

C. Everett Berry: It is hardly a groundbreaking insight to say that in the modern, Western world human sexuality has been reduced to a mere appetite that can be satisfied by almost any conceivable hedonistic means. Whether it be teenagers sewing their wild oats during their college-fraternity days, disillusioned spouses fragmenting their families by engaging in devastating affairs, or liberated entrepreneurs and celebrities having relationships devoid of marriage altogether, the fact remains that sexuality is now defined in terms of convenience, eroticism, and autonomy. Likewise, an obsession with sexuality permeates the ethos of our culture because of the ubiquitous influence of media exposure. One cannot drive down the highway, surf the web, watch a sporting event, or even shop in a grocery store without being bombarded with revealing billboards, immodest images, suggestive commercials, or tabloid snapshots that pulsate with sexual exploitation. It is no wonder that the present cultural climate considers the Judeo-Christian concepts of

monogamy and sexual purity as “retro” novelties that are as out of date as VCR’s and dial-up internet.

Ironically though, in the midst of such moral decay our culture does recognize one thing about sexuality that many Christians fail to acknowledge, namely, that it is an intrinsic part of what it means to be human. This point is often ignored by the church because treatments of sexuality are typically restricted to upholding moral standards, such as abstinence for the sake of remaining pure for a future mate, or avoiding unwanted consequences of unruly sexual activity (e.g., unexpected pregnancies or STD’s). Indeed these perspectives have their place. But alone, they miss a basic component embedded in the canon of Scripture, which is that sexuality must be understood within the larger framework of a biblical-theological anthropology. With this approach, we find that the significance of human sexuality is grounded in the same place as all issues regarding human existence, namely, creation.

The reason sexuality is so distorted today is not just because people want to defy moral guidelines or fulfill their needs impulsively. There is a deeper problem. People as sinners naturally want to define every part of their identity, including their sexuality, in noncreationist terms. So, for example, when the apostle Paul states that man suppresses the truth of the Creator through unrighteousness (Rom 1:18-19), this includes a suppression of any notion of a *created* sexuality. The implication, then, is that all acts of sexual sin are *de facto* expressions of an atheistic view of sexuality, which in Pauline terms is idolatry. This being the case, a biblically holistic view of sexuality does not start with mere polemics against pre-marital

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sex or adultery. Rather, the church should begin with the fact that men and women as sexual beings are made in the image of God, thereby emphasizing that a right understanding of sexuality is based upon a right understanding about Christian theism. But what does this approach look like? Two brief suggestions will be noted.

First, we should acknowledge that the dignity of sexuality is based upon the fact that human beings reflect the image of their Creator *functionally*, not just ontologically. When the Lord declared in Gen 1:26-28 that He would create a man and woman in his own image, part of this reality entailed the activities of dominion over the earth as well as relating to each other intimately. Further commentary is provided on this latter point in Gen 2:23-24 where it is asserted that Adam's bond with Eve sets a standard to be followed, namely, that when any man takes a wife, he enters a covenant that actually supersedes his relationship with his parents. So whereas children derive their physical existence from their father and mother, that relationship is subordinate to the new union that comes when their child takes a spouse. It is crucial to note that the order of sexuality reflects the very essence of its Creator. Covenantal faithfulness and unrelenting loyalty are imperative to human sexuality because they are indicative of God's own nature. Consequently, when one attempts to define sexuality in ways contrary to this paradigm, inevitably another model must be put in its place. Today it is commonly defined in terms that see humanity as a mere biological experiment or hopeless existential entity. The end result of such approaches is really a degrading of sexuality. If humans are cheap, then sexuality is even cheaper.

However, recognizing that sexuality is holy because its Creator is holy makes the topic what it should be, sacred.

In conjunction with the first point, we must also concede that the broader theological ramifications of sexuality must be articulated in light of what it means to be a part of the new humanity established by Jesus Christ. Here the point essentially is that sexuality is not just related to the original created order but also to the very gospel itself. Covenantal faithfulness is not only an idea that references God's character in the creation of the first Adam, it is also indicative of the salvation we have in the second Adam. Therefore, a theology of sexuality should reflect the devotion that Christ has for his people (Eph 5:25-33). This has incredible ramifications for Christian living. When believing husbands fail to love their wives selflessly, they are saying to the world that Christ does not love his church. When wives do not follow the headship of their husbands, they are saying that the church does not submit faithfully to Christ. And when the husband, for example, violates his marriage vows, the message conveyed is that Christ can be an adulterer because he can find another spouse, thereby contradicting the promise that a believer cannot be separated from the love that is found in Christ (contra Rom 8:35-39). What this shows, then, is that a sound view of sexuality is based not only on a correct view of creation, but also of soteriology. Indeed, both, biblically speaking, are intimately related to each other. Obviously, this places a huge responsibility on Christians, not only to think correctly about these matters, but also to live them out practically in the home, church, and society.