

An Orphan in the Cosmos? An Adventist Reflection on the Creation-Evolution Debate

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I. Introduction

The task before us is extremely important, difficult, potentially divisive and emotional, but the scientific culture in which we live makes the task unavoidable. Our mission confronts the world with a call to worship God as Creator in a context in which the biblical God is being displaced as the true Creator. The church cannot ignore that particular intellectual milieu within which it seeks to accomplish its mission. A proper understanding of the issues and problems is certainly the first step in bringing us closer to a possible solution. Hence, we are here to explore the interaction between science and faith from the perspective of Adventist thinking. Needless to say, the topic is extremely intricate; even a battlefield. What can I say as an Adventist about this complex issue? I can only share reflections and suggestions. They are the views of a concerned church member who recognizes that his knowledge is limited but who can at the same time make some affirmations.

II. Complexity of the Task

The complexity of the topic is illustrated by the fact that Christian theologians and scientists have not yet been able to reach a universally agreed understanding of the relationship between the disciplines they represent. Several different and even contradictory approaches are available in the literature on the subject.[1] Some argue that science and theology make *conflicting* and irreconcilable claims on the history of nature, and that we must choose one of the claims. The idea has prevailed among some intellectuals that theologians have historically opposed the progress of scientific development in the interest of dogmatic

beliefs. This is now changing as a result of some recent historical studies on the interaction between science and religion. The relationship has been much more positive and has "often nurtured and encouraged scientific endeavor, while at other times the two have co-existed without either tension or attempts at harmonization." [2]

Other scholars have argued that science and theology are two *independent* disciplines with practically no relation with each other. One deals with the natural world through the use of the scientific method and the other deals with matters related to the religious dimension of human beings. The two realms of inquiry are fundamentally different and those involved in them should not interfere with each other. This is difficult to accomplish because in both cases the inquirer and the object of the inquiry is the same, that is to say scientific research and theological analysis have as one of their central purposes a search for human self-understanding. They cannot function independent from each other. [3]

For others the connection between science and religion is *dialogical*, that is to say, there are areas of the phenomena that are of interest to both disciplines; there is an overlap of concerns. What is then required is an open dialogue between the two disciplines in which they learn from each other. A dialogue is always useful and desirable. We believe that "rightly understood, science and the written word agree, and each sheds light on the other." [4] This mutual shedding of light is better achieved in the context of a dialogue. The problem here would be defining the boundaries of the dialogue. [5]

Integration seeks to demonstrate that science and religion together are able to provide an all encompassing understanding of the universe, and particularly of the phenomenon of human life on this planet. This is best done through natural theology. Theistic evolution comes very close to this approach, but it is possibly best illustrated in Teilhard de Chardin's attempt to merge into one speculative theory the biological evolution and spiritual development of the human race. [6] This approach weakens the grounding of theology in special revelation by putting the emphasis on natural theology.

Unquestionably, there are areas of scientific research that intersect theological interests and concerns making it impossible to relegate theology to the sphere of the spiritual dimension of human beings. It is usually stated that those areas are primarily the doctrines of human nature and creation.[7] This is certainly true, but we should include among those the doctrine of God (metaphysics), the most important one. In almost all efforts to integrate science and religion the tendency is for theology to be informed by scientific research, and then attempt to develop a theology that in conjunction with the scientific theories is able to integrate as much data as possible. Here the risks are immense and require a clear definition of the context within which theology should function in order to be loyal to itself as a biblically-based discipline. A couple of examples may help to clarify my argument.

Some scientists and theologians believe that based on what we know about cosmology and quantum physics the explanatory power of *pantheism* is equal or superior to Christian theism. They will acknowledge that "eastern metaphysics is not obviously inferior to theistic metaphysics when it comes to accounting for the data.[8] For others the explanatory power of *panentheism*[9] is superior to pantheism and theism.[10] Those assertions determine the validity of a theological statement on the basis of the explanatory power of the statement itself. It begins with the scientific data and then develops a theological position highly controlled by the data itself. Here the words of Kenneth Cauthen may serve to illustrate the magnitude of the problem.

If one appropriately places all the relevant variables which enter into the problematic of creation, the historically standard types of philosophies can be specified. If the world is taken to be self-existent or derived in time from some minimal conditions productive of present actualities, then some version of atheism, naturalism, or scientific pantheism results. If one views the world as existing in an eternal and necessary identity or unity with the all-inclusive Whole which is itself regarded as the

Fullness of Being, then one has some kind of classical Western pantheism. If one sees the finite order as standing out from a background of primordial nothingness, then one has something akin to certain forms of Oriental speculation. If the world is taken to be a different order of existence, though radically dependent on some prior and infinitely superior eternal actuality or ideality for either its being and /or order and value, then one has some form of deism, traditional theism, or idealism. Finally, if one combines elements from a number of these alternatives, using a basic model of Perfect Becoming, one has a kind of recent panentheism. Now, obviously, there are many possibilities of combination which have been or could be worked out.[11] The quote indicates that a particular configuration or interpretation of the data will lead to a particular understanding of God's relationship with the natural world. Obviously the question is whether our understanding of God should be determined by the explanatory power of a scientific theory or whether special revelation should be determinative. For us as Adventists the explanatory power of a theory should not be enough to establish it as indispensable for theological reflection.

III. Reflections and Affirmations

Aware of the complexity of determining or defining the relationship between science and religion, I will proceed to share with you some reflections on the subject from my Adventist perspective. It will, I hope, contribute to a further clarification of the issues and problems and to the identification of some constant elements in Adventist thinking and theology as they relate to science and religion.

A. An Adventist Point of Departure

In our search for meaning, we all start somewhere, we all have a launching platform, a harbor from which we initiate our journey.[12] That journey, I must admit, is not so much

about facts as it is about perspectives. Certainly some facts fit a particular perspective of the natural world better than others, but in most cases facts can be read differently. Here post-modern thought is useful in reminding us that scientific research, or any research for that matter, is not purely objective. We never totally leave the harbor; everything we do is colored by the configuration of the world we experienced when still at the harbor. It is very difficult to explore on its own terms what is beyond the launching platform. If what we find "out there" does not seem to fit our conceptual paradigms we tend to "make it fit." In that daring task, we risk facing some sort of distortion that is, nevertheless, accepted by many as unquestionable truth because it comes under the name of theology or science accompanied by the name of renowned scholars.

Adventists are childlike. They believe that the point of departure is the divine perspective, God's revelation in Scripture.[13] We start our journey from above. We do not need to apologize for that; remember, we all begin somewhere. Apart from God, humans are the greatest mystery in the universe we know and they have not been able to explain the mystery of their own existence. Consciousness has shown itself incapable of explaining or even fully comprehending consciousness itself. We look at ourselves and we wonder about ourselves. The human brain examines itself in the laboratory and it is surprised and amazed at its own complexity and at the intricacies of its nature and function. It remains a mystery to itself. This unique piece of matter is and will most probably remain beyond its own full understanding. Self-conscious matter creates theories about its own origin but remains unpersuaded about their ultimate value.

There is an interesting phenomenon in human consciousness: It instinctively searches outside itself for ultimate meaning. Aware of the fact that it is the most mysterious thing in the universe it searches for MindBnot inert matterBto explain mind. Adventists believe that the divine Mind created human consciousness and that it can find itself only in the Creator. This cannot be discovered by human consciousness itself, but it is something that the Creator

shared with the unique piece of matter called the human brain. The explanatory force of this revelation is so powerful that it has for centuries and millennia satisfied our search for meaning. That divine speaking in the Scripture is our launching platform.

B. An Adventist Understanding of Origins

Adventists are creationists, but creationists of a particular type. They are among an endangered species of creationists who still adhere to a literal reading of Gen 1-3. What used to be the prevailing position of the Judeo-Christian tradition is slowly dying. This does not mean that Christians no longer believe that God is the Creator, but that human consciousness has not been able to come up with a synthesis accepted by all that combines the divine revelation from above with the revelation from below. A harmonious and meaningful interaction between scientific research and a literal reading of Gen 1-3 appears to be impossible. If such interaction is to be sought along the lines of human natural evolution it would not only appear to be impossible but is impossible.

Christians who follow the modern evolutionary understanding of the origin of humans offer us a minimalist, reductionist theological reading of Gen 1-2. They have concluded, mainly (though not exclusively) on the basis of the interpretation of scientific evidence, that a literal reading of those passages is exegetically misinformed and unintentionally misguided. The suggestion is that if we listen to the message of the text, to what it intends to share with the reader, we would realize that its purpose is to declare that God is the Creator. It answers the question of the *Who*, not of the *how*.^[14] Left only with that particular interpretation of the text we would not know much about the God who created us. In fact, this specific view seems to downsize the God of Gen 1-2 to the God of natural theology, the God of the philosophers. Leaving aside for the time being the literal reading of the biblical text, we would have to ask whether that is all the text is theologically saying to us concerning the divine act of creation. The answer, it appears to me, should be a resounding no.

If we apply a theological approach to the interpretation of Gen 1-2, we must acknowledge that through the use of particular terminology and by the flow of the narrative, the text is telling us *at least* two other things besides the fact that God is the Creator. First, it informs us that God created in an *effortless* way.[15] Consequently the question of the "how" of creation is not totally ignored even in a non-literal reading of Gen 1-2. Genesis describes God creating through His word, through a divine command. There is not a conflict between God the Creator and primeval powers who are opposing the divine design for the cosmos or for our planet. The image of God projected by the chapters is that of a God who is in control, whose will finds no opposition from within or outside the world He is forming.[16] This image of the biblical Creator does not appear to be compatible with the God who somehow is involved in the creation of human consciousness through an evolutionary process based on natural selection and the survival of the fittest. There is an essential incompatibility between the two, to the point that the second one appears to look more and more like an idol rather than like the true God.

The second thing the text of Gen 1-2 tells us about God is that He created in an *orderly* way. The sequential order of creation is one of the most amazing things in Gen 1. Again, leaving aside the literal interpretation of the chapter, one should acknowledge that there is a fundamental order expressed through the circle of seven days moving from the raw materials, to light, the formation of the atmosphere, the dry land, vegetationBplants and treesB, the role of the sun and the moon as sources of light and to mark time, the animal world, and finally humans. The eco-system created by God surprisingly agrees with what we today know is needed for the preservation of life, particularly human life, on our planet.[17] The evolutionary model is not characterized by order but by trial, error and alleged self-correction. If one were to talk about order in the evolutionary process it would have to be defined in terms of the ultimate, still unrealized, result of a process that is fundamentally characterized by disorder. The God of Gen 1 is significantly different from the God of the evolutionary

process.

Adventists affirm the theological message of Gen 1-2, but such reading should not become captive to a minimalist theological approach to the scriptural passage. A reductionist reading of the creation account of Genesis leaves us with an understanding of God along the lines of natural theology. Such reductionism may be useful in attempting to merge evolutionary thinking with biblical theology but it falls short of uncovering the fullness of the theological message of those chapters. If we are willing to acknowledge that God created in an orderly and effortless way, the incompatibility between a theological reading of Gen 1 and evolution becomes obvious. If in order to harmonize Gen 1 with modern scientific theories, we have to abandon a literal reading of Gen 1 and use, instead, a theological reading of the text, we would be simply restating the problem but not solving it. The theological reading of the text remains incompatible with evolutionary models of the world and humans.

How, then, should we deal with the problem? Those who are caught in the sticky web of trying to merge an evolutionary approach with the biblical text do not have many options. They can stick only to the reductionist theological reading of Gen 1, ignoring the other dimensions of the theological landscape of the text, or give up any attempt to harmonize the two different approaches. This last approach could lead into the trap of agnosticism,[18] or to a removal of biblical creation from the realm of credible explanations for the origin of conscious life on the planet by arguing that the Bible does not address that particular question.[19] Consequently, the issue of origins is transferred to the field of science, while perhaps acknowledging that at the present time scientific research has not been able to come up with a theory that deserves universal recognition.[20] Obviously those approaches do not solve any problem and neither do they bring us closer to a solution. By rejecting biblical creationism they leave us in a state of absolute disorientation in an area of extreme importance for human self-understanding and self-fulfilment. Those who argue that with respect to origins the only thing we know is that God is the Creator, are tacitly recognizing that we are

in darkness concerning how we came into being. That is why there is an appeal to science to fill in the gap. The most important question for human beings is possibly their presence in the universe. It is an existential, philosophical, scientific and theological question that needs to be answered. Adventists believe that God has answered it for us. Nothing could be more damaging to consciousness than to exist without a clear understanding of its past, perceiving itself as an orphan in the cosmos.

Adventists have always maintained and promoted a literal and a theological reading of Gen 1-3 based on what we perceive to be the intent of the author and the obvious meaning of the text.[21] This is our point of departure as we explore the intricacies of science and faith in a social context in which the biblical text does not seem to be significantly relevant. We have accepted as valid and relevant the biblical account of the origin of everything, and particularly of human consciousness. It is only in the text that Supreme Mind explains to mind its sublime origin. We admit that the literal-theological reading of Gen 1-2 tends to exacerbate the problem of the relationship between evolutionary theories and religion, but we have given priority to the authority of the biblical text. In fact, at the moment we set aside the literal/historical and theological reading of Gen 1-2, we are on our own in the search for a definition of the doctrine of creation or at least on the subject of the origin and history of human consciousness.

C. Adventist Wholistic View of Reality

In spite of the fact that we do acknowledge a serious tension, even incompatibility, between our understanding of Gen 1-3 and modern evolutionary theories, Adventists affirm that there is a fundamental harmony between science and biblical revelation. Adventist thought reflects the wholistic outlook of biblical thinking and consequently we rejected anthropological and cosmic dualism. We presuppose that reality is an integrated, unified totality and we seek to understand as much as possible its functional, structural and

conceptual harmony. Many scientists outside the Adventist circle believe that the universe is a self-consistent, integrated unity, and are seeking to define the unifying law or principle that holds it together. Be.g. the so-called Great Unifying Theory (GUT) or the Theory of Everything (TOE). That wholeness implies an essential unity within the different components of the universe.

Our conception of the cosmos is not based on a purely naturalistic understanding of it, but on a profound religious and theological conviction. It is our deep certitude that if the totality of the reality we perceive and experience was the result of God's creative power, then there must be coherence, consistency and harmony in the universe at all levels. That reality should reflect to some extent the order that characterizes the divine mind. We also affirm that the ultimate power that sustains and holds the universe together is not the energy and mystery residing at quantum level, but the presence of God within His creation (Col 1:17). That presence does not exclude natural laws but makes their operations possible.

D. Adventists and Fragmented Reality

Human experience has shown that fragmentation is a fundamental characteristic of the social and natural world in which we live. The wholeness of the universe is not obvious to human consciousness. In fact we are perfectly aware of the fact that personal wholeness is fragmented. We can hardly experience inner peace. We find it very difficult to co-exist in harmony with other fellow-human beings. Human consciousness exists in tension with itself and with other expressions of it. Theologians attempt to explain this strange phenomenon through the doctrine of the fall. As a result of that all-encompassing disruption of the world the wholeness of God's creation was altered in a permanent way, making it difficult for the human mind to restore God's original wholeness even at the conceptual level. Adventists refer to that existential condition as the cosmic conflict.

Usually that conflict is defined in ideological terms, that is to say as a conflict between

truth and error. But the conflict takes place at all levels. The original and constant impact of the phenomenon of sin on the material universe is hardly addressed in discussions about the cosmic conflict. That is understandable because we can speak only with an element of certainty about the results of the controversy in us and we do know that there is something intrinsically wrong with us. We exist in tension with ourselves, struggling to understand the mixture of good and evil that defines us. We know that our bodies are wonderfully made but we also know that they soon deteriorate and finally die.

Through our consciousness the cosmos looks at itself and is confused about itself. We examine the natural world and we are as confused as we were when we looked at our own nature. We find there so much beauty and order that it is impossible to ignore the reality of design and intelligence behind it. But design does not permeate the natural world to the exclusion of everything else. We also find disorder, contradictions, inconsistencies and death. As we examine the details of nature and develop models to facilitate the interpretation of the facts we are discovering that we are still unable to incorporate all the facts into a meaningful and fully integrated totality. The truth is that we do not have all the pieces of the puzzle, we do not have all the facts, and at times I get the impression that we do not even know what we are exactly looking for.

The reality of disruption in the universe makes it practically impossible for us to apprehend the original wholeness of the cosmos. Because of that most disturbing human condition the divine speaking in the Word and His speaking in the world of nature co-exist in a state of tension and apparent contradiction. Adventist theologians and scientists should operate within the frame of reference provided by the cosmic conflict, and approach their respective disciplines in a spirit of humility and dependence on each other and ultimately on God. In that task we must presuppose that the fragmentation of the cosmos is not overcome through a natural evolutionary process but through the direct ministry and work of Christ on behalf of his creation.

E. Adventists and their Ground of Certainty

The disruption of the natural world and of the human mind should alert us against claiming certainty based on the use of a particular scientific methodology in the study of nature. Fortunately scientists are aware of the tentativeness of the significance of their discoveries. Theologians should also acknowledge that their minds have been clouded by sin and that their personal interpretation of a particular passage is not necessarily right. We should be willing to acknowledge that "human knowledge of both material and spiritual things is partial and imperfect." [22] The Spirit can assist both scientists and theologians as they work with the community of believers in their respective search for meaning and for a wholistic reading of the cosmos in which faith and science are properly integrated.

Adventists find certainty only in the message of the Scripture and that determines the way they read and interpret all other experiences. In the quest to harmonize faith and science, priority is given to the Scripture. Human theories based on the interpretation of evidence or facts are evaluated not only on the basis of their scientific grounding, cohesiveness and self-consistency, but particularly on the basis of scriptural data addressing the fundamental issue. The Scripture contains "the foundation of all true science." [23] Therefore the problem is not located in the study of science, which we are called to study, but in mingling it "with the speculations and theories of men," [24] which should not be accepted as scientific facts. The conflict between science and faith or the Scriptures is not necessarily located in the nature of scientific research but in the theories scientists draw from it. A good principle to keep in mind is that "when the Bible makes statements of facts in nature, science may be compared with the written word, and a correct understanding of both will always prove them to be in harmony." [25] This principle is based on the Adventist integrated view of truth and reality and on the recognition that we do not have all the facts but only scattered pieces of the cosmic puzzle. In the context of that uncertainty, as indicated above, Adventists have grounded their

lives as individuals and as a community of faith on the special revelation of God found in the Scripture. Without it we would not know about our origin and destiny. In fact we would be lost in the vastness of a cosmos that is beyond our full understanding.

F. Adventists and the Eternal Search for Understanding

There is an aspect of the Adventist concern with the natural world that is seldom emphasized but that could encourage us as we face our present limitations in the understanding of the natural world. Scientists and theologians work with the presupposition that the natural world is intelligible and that its intelligibility finds an analogue in human rationality and its capacity to grasp and understand it. The intelligibility of creation is grounded for us on the fact that it was created by God and that He is rationality in Himself. He also created rational, self-conscious beings and entrusted to them the care of the natural world (Gen 1:28). By doing that God was informing humans that there is not a fragment of creation that is sacred and therefore beyond our exploration. He wanted us to rule over it with our hands and minds.

The exploration of God's creation was most likely entrusted to us by God because, in that search for understanding, our own existence was to be profoundly enriched. There was something wonderful, majestic and mysterious in nature, and nature was invited to explore itself through the only center of created consciousness on the planet, the human mind. Through this self-exploration, creation was going to be able to uncover the expression of God's wisdom and power encoded within itself. The natural world, including ourselves, are in a certain way expressions of divine thoughts. What we see was originally conceived in the divine mind and at the moment of creation, through the power of the divine word, God's thoughts took the objective and concrete form of the reality we see and experience. When we examine the macro/microcosmos we are in fact examining what was originally a divine thought, i.e. God's wisdom and power. What this seems to imply is that we will never be able

to grasp fully the structural, functional and conceptual unity of the cosmos. Even in the absence of sin, we will always confront new challenges, new questions, perhaps new uncertainties as we explore ourselves and the environment within which we exist.

This "limitation" is not an unfortunate cosmic accident but an intrinsic and essential element in the divine intention for us and for our eternal well-being. God's intention for us is beyond our imagination: "To dwell forever in this home of the blest, to bear in soul, body, and spirit, not the dark traces of sin and the curse, but the perfect likeness of our Creator, and through ceaseless ages to advance in wisdom, in knowledge and holiness, ever exploring new fields of thought, ever finding new wonders and new glories, ever increasing in capacity to know and to enjoy and to love, and knowing that there is still beyond us joy and love, and wisdom infinite, such is the object to which the Christian hope is pointing"[26] The Adventist hope eagerly waits for the moment when "every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of the mind and soul and body." [27]

Eternity will not be long enough for us to understand the wisdom and power of God manifested in the creation of the cosmos and on the cross of Christ. Our existence will lose its meaningfulness if at some point in eternity we are finally able to master all knowledge and wisdom. But it will never happen. It may be useful for us to recognize the blessing of that "limitation" while we still struggle to understand God's creation in a world distorted by sin.

IV. Conclusion

My reflections suggest that the harmonization of science and faith among the intellectuals of this world remains an unfinished task. Scientists and theologians continue the dialogue searching for the final elusive paradigm. We are participants in that conversation and we also face serious challenges and many unanswered questions. We are also tempted to lift natural theology, however we define it, to the level of biblical revelation. To succumb to that temptation would be tantamount to a radical transformation of the Adventist message and mission.

We should not consider the question of the interaction of science and faith as an intellectual curiosity of interest to scientists and theologians. It is rather one that impacts several of the central tenets of the message God entrusted to His end-time remnant people. We should leave this place better informed concerning the complexity of the issues and the limitations of our knowledge. But we should also leave this place re-affirmed in the conviction that the Adventist understanding of the doctrine of creation remains, like Noah's ark, safe and secure in the midst of confusion and disorientation.

- [1]. On what follows see, Ian Barbour, *Religion in an Age of Science* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), pp. 4-23; cf. John Polkinghorne, *Science and Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998), pp. 20-22.
- [2]. Gary B. Ferngren, "Introduction," in *Science and Religion: A Historical Introduction*, edited by Gary B. Ferngren (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. ix. This volume is, with only one exception, a collection of some of the articles found in *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Gary F. Ferngren, Darrel W. Amundsen, and Anne-Marie E. Nakhla (New York: Garland, 2000). See also, David C. Lindbergh and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter Between Christianity and Science* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1986).
- [3]. We can also mention psychological studies in the area of human nature and their interaction with biblical anthropology (cf. Stanton L. Jones, "A Constructive Relationship for Religion with the Science and Profession of Psychology: Perhaps the Boldest Model Yet," *American Psychologist* 49.3 [1994]: 184-199); and scientific research on homosexuality and related biblical materials. One cannot simply ignore the need for that interaction, while at the same time giving priority to the biblical position on the issues.
- [4]. Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Christian Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1913), p. 426.
- [5]. For a very good suggestion concerning how the dialogue could take place from an Adventist perspective, see Leonard Brand, "The Integration of Faith and Science," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14.1 (Spring 2003): 121-137.
- [6]. For Teilhard de Chardin evolution was the force that brings the universe into oneness. There is an element of consciousness in matter that is supremely manifested in humanity. According to him the end process of natural evolution was the mystic merging of humanity in Christ, whose body is in some way the cosmos itself.
- [7]. Barbour, p. xiv.
- [8]. Philip Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), p. 157. He himself leans more toward theism.
- [9]. Panentheism claims that the world exists in God but that the reality of God is not exhausted in the world. He works and interacts with the natural world from within it in an open process of becoming in which He Himself participates.
- [10]. Barbour, p. 270, comments that "the process model thus seems to have fewer weaknesses than the other models." Cf. Clayton, p. 160, concludes that "theism in general, and panentheism in particular, is able and I believe is *best* able to integrate the scientific results with what we know of our existence as human beings in this world." On the explanatory power of panentheism see, Frank Tipler, "The Omega Point Theory: A Model of an Evolving God," in *Physics, Philosophy, and Theology: A Common Quest for Understanding*, edited by Robert J. Russell, William R. Stoeger, and George V. Coyne (Vatican City: Vatican Observatory, 1988), pp. 313-331; and Kenneth Cauthen, *Science Secularization and God: Toward a Theology of the Future* (Nashville, TN: Abington, 1969), pp. 164-169. See also, Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1985), pp. 13-17.
- [11]. Cauthen, p. 153.
- [12]. John Polkinghorne writes, "Scientists do not look at the world with a blank gaze; they view it from a chosen perspective and bring principles of interpretation and prior expectations of meaning to bear upon what they observe. Scientists wear (theoretical) 'spectacles behind the eyes' (Russell Hanson). They may decide that the prescription for those spectacles needs changing from time to time. Science is corrigible but without some such interpretative aid the practice of science would be impossible" (*Science and Theology* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress,

1998], pp. 9-10).

[13]. On the priority of Scripture in the integration of faith and science see, Frank M. Hasel, "Living With Confidence Despite Some Open Questions: Upholding the Truth of Creation Amidst Theological Pluralism," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14.1 (Spring 2003): 235-241.

[14]. There is a tendency among a small number of Adventists to argue that the creation narrative is not describing *how* God brought everything into existence but rather that He is the Creator of an orderly world. This was the conclusion reached by Richard L. Hamill, who argued that through the inspiration-revelation process, God gave truth about creation which could not be learned by human observation and reason—namely, that everything that exists owes its origin to God who by his spoken word made things to be which had no existence before. . . . A division must be made between such cosmogonic, theological truth and cosmological details taken from the culture of the time (Richard L. Hamill, "Creation Themes in the OT Other than Genesis 1 and 2," in *Creation Reconsidered: Scientific, Biblical, and Theological Perspectives*, James L. Hayward, editor [Roseville, CA: Association of Adventist Forums, 2000], p. 260). Larry Herr concurred with Hamill (Genesis 1 in Historical-Critical Perspective, *Spectrum* 13.2 [1982]:61). Douglas R. Clark summarized the issue stating, "The biblical record addresses the >who= of creation more than any other concern" ("Genesis," in *Introducing the Bible*, vol. 1, edited by Douglas R. Clark and John C. Brunt [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997], p. 103). Among the other concerns of the text, he lists topics like value, aesthetic, order, and equality. With respect to creation and science he shows a pastoral concern: "Maintain an openness toward new and potentially surprising discoveries and to retain faith in the God of biblical creation" (p. 104). Alden Thompson raises the issue of the two creation accounts and leaves it open concluding, "There may be diverse creation accounts, but one thing is clear: God creates!" His argument seems to be that it is not important to decide whether there is one or two creation accounts; what really matters is that the message we find there is that God is the Creator (The Old Testament Canon, in *Introducing the Bible*, vol. 1, p. 27). Raymond F. Cottrell preferred to use expressions like "message/revealed truth" and the "historically conditioned form" of the creation story. The message is that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and not how He created (Raymond F. Cottrell, "Inspiration and Authority of the Bible in Relation to the Natural World," in *Creation Reconsidered*, pp. 195, 196, 199, 203). This particular theological understanding of Gen 1-2 is not unique to some Adventist theologians. We also find it among evangelicals and Catholics. As is well-known, Catholics have rejected the literal reading of Gen 1-3 and have been reworking their understanding of original sin. For a summary of the Catholic discussion see, Christ of Gestrich, *The Return of Splendor in the World: The Christian Doctrine of Sin and Forgiveness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 228-233. He refers to the Catholic theologian Herbert Haag, who wrote, according to him, "that the priestly creation story in Gen 1:1-2:4a is limited to the statement that God created man. The biblical account basically leaves open the technical question about the 'how' of humanity's creation" (p. 231). On the evangelical side see, John H. Stek, "What Says the Scripture?" in *Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World's Formation*, edited by Howard J. Van Till (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), who argues that when we read the opening chapters of Genesis in the context of the rest of the Scripture we learn "that the God who comes in redemption and blessing (but also in judgment and curse) is none other than the Creator of all that is, and that the ultimate power and purpose at work in history is none other than the power and purpose at work in creation" (pp. 222-223).

[15]. Take for instance the verb *bara'* ("to create"), used in Gen 1 to designate "God's extraordinary, sovereign, both effortless and fully free, unhindered creation" (W. H. Schmidt, "Br' to create," in *Theological Lexicon of the OT*, vol. 1, edited by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997], p. 255).

[16]. S. Dean McBride, Jr., "Divine Protocol: Genesis 1:1-2:3 as Prologue to the Pentateuch," in *God Who Creates*, edited by William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 9, comments, "Above all, the protocol attests that created order emerged incrementally, without hint of conflict or caprice, in obedient response to the articulated will of the creator."

[17]. For instance, Kenneth A. Matthews remarks, "Creation shows a patterned hierarchy: from the inanimate to the animate and, within the animate, from vegetation to human life. This corresponds well with the world we know" (*Genesis 1-11:26* [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996], p. 110).

[18]. This seems to be the position taken by Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationist: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), p. xvi.

[19]. This is basically what Walter Brueggemann has done when he states that the question of scientific theories is not pertinent to the text because "the text is a proclamation of God's decisive dealing with his creation" and that "when the text is heard as news in a theological idiom, it leaves open all scientific theories about the origin of the world. The Bible takes no stand on any of these" (*Genesis* [Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1982], pp. 16, 26).

[20]. This seems to be the position taken by Fritz Guy, "Interpreting Gen 1 in the 21st Century," Paper presented at the International Faith and Science Conference, August 25, 2002, pp. 20-25. He seems to consider natural evolution a viable description of the history of nature.

[21]. The most recent exposition of that position has been offered by Richard M. Davidson, "The Biblical Account of Origins," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14.1 (Spring 2003): 4-43. See also, Gerhard F. Hasel, "The 'Days' of Creation in Gen 1: Literal 'Days' or Figurative 'Periods/EPOCHS' of Time?" in *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary: Why a Global Flood Is Vital to the Doctrine of Atonement*, edited by John Templeton Baldwin (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2000), pp. 40-68; and, Randall W. Younker, "Genesis 2: A Second Creation Account?" in *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary*, pp. 69-78.

[22]. E. G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, p. 321.

[23]. E. G. White, *Christian Education*, p. 32.

[24]. E. G. White, *Education*, p. 227.

[25]. E. G. White, *Healthful Living*, p. 286.

[26]. E. G. White, *Healthful Living*, p. 299.

[27]. *Great Controversy*, p. 677.