



Greatly Disturbed

Dear Dr. Winter,

I am sorry to have delayed writing so long but was greatly disturbed by your support of unbiblical approaches to God's six day creation in the Oct-Dec 2003 *IJFM*.

I hold you in high regard and due to this felt moved to write.

1. The inclusion of articles by those who have woven evolutionist/atheistic ideas into their concept of creation should at the very least have been balanced by articles from Bible literalists who accept God's Word as meaning a literal six day creation.

[Answers in Genesis] is a major ministry that is many times larger than ICR and headed by Ken Ham and a large team of well qualified scientists from all major disciplines.

Ralph Winter:

a. We thought we did in fact present a spectrum of positions.

b. We rejoice that Ken Ham and his people feel free to interpret the Bible according to their own consciences. The force of our Volume 20:4 was to accept the fact that earnest Evangelicals, who take the Bible to be inerrant and literal, actually do vary in their understanding of (but not in their faithfulness to) the Bible.

2. The debate is not between "young and old earth creationists," but whether evolutionary and scientific theories are given precedence over God's Word, or will we accept as foundational truth what God plainly states in Genesis 1.

Ralph Winter:

We can agree that it is not a question of old or young earth but what the Bible

says. However, few Bible-believing scholars believe that what the Bible always says—or Genesis 1 "plainly states"—has only one interpretation. That is why there is discussion. It is not a case of some believing the Bible and others not. Everyone who wrote for IJFM 20:4 is a Bible believer.

3. The idea that evangelicalism and the "gospel" and salvation are not dependant upon this above debate is dangerously false. The "Christian" western societies have been assailed with evolutionary and scientific thought that has gradually eroded the inerrancy, credibility and trustworthiness of Genesis/the Bible. The Scriptures teach a literal interpretation of Genesis, supported by the Lord Jesus, the early church and centuries of belief. Scientific discoveries must fit in with Scripture and not the other way round.

Ralph Winter:

a. The Bible does not suggest that our salvation depends on certain interpretations. What is dangerous would be any assumption about the Bible's untrustworthiness.

b. What truly erodes confidence in the Bible is when believers insist on interpretations that do not accord with God's creation, as did Calvin and Luther when they opposed Copernicus. To treat the Bible fairly we must be as sure as we can that we do not interpret it wrongly.

4. The intellectualism of seminary and evangelical college professors resulted in much of the liberal ideas in the church, and adding their "scientific" arguments is simply a further means for undermining the absolute and clear teaching of Genesis that a child or uneducated native can readily understand.

Ralph Winter:

It would seem to be very unfair to the Bible to assume that children or uneducated people will all agree on what the Bible means. The apostle Paul apparently had to restudy the Bible for three years in order to understand it correctly.

5. Given your highly prominent position, your attempt to be eclectic and accept these varied interpretations of Genesis is dangerous. You in effect validate the support for questioning literal Bible statements and by default condone unbiblical positions on creationism.

In Christ,

Jonathan Miller, MD, MPH

Ralph Winter:

a. Our desire is not to be eclectic.

b. To allow for the possibility that Bible-believing Christians may not always understand the Bible in the same way does, you are right, allow for the possibility that some are right and some are wrong. That, incidentally, is not the same as denying the trustworthiness of the Bible. It is to deny the trustworthiness of all interpretations.

c. Speaking for myself, I want to be willing to admit that when earnest Bible believers come up with differing interpretations, we must consider those differing perspectives to be "precarious," as I do in my article in this issue. I grew up in a Moody Bible Institute world, and with a Scofield Reference Bible. Both were solidly evangelical; the fact that both accepted an "old earth" did not make them Darwinists. I highly respect the Seventh-Day Adventist tradition. They are certainly Bible believers. But I don't think they are always right in their interpretations thereof. Their doctrine of a young earth came into Moody circles only in the last few years. I see no reason for ignoring or denouncing the longstanding historical views of such Bible-believing Evangelicals.