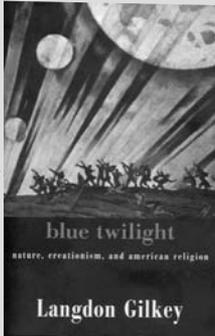


Book Reviews

Blue Twilight: Nature, Creationism, and American Religion, Langdon Gilkey, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001, pp. 180. ISBN: 080063294X



—Reviewed by Ralph D. Winter

This is a book of ruminations about a variety of subjects, generally critical of fundamentalist Evangelicals. Here is a comment on one specific item. Gilkey states that the Little Rock, Arkansas trial in 1981 challenged in Federal court a state Act 590 in which “creation science” was described as involving “the sudden creation of all things out of nothing.”

That was 1981. Since then the Big Bang theory has gained wider and wider acceptance in scientific circles, a theory in which the entire universe did in fact pop into existence out of practically nothing. More precisely, the Big Bang theory involves an initial expansion incredibly faster than the speed of light. Light speeds at 186,000 miles in one second. In one year light travels 31,500,000 times that far. The Big Bang theory postulates that from a tiny particle things expanded in less than 1/1,000th of a second, to the size of a galaxy 100,000 light years across. That is, 100,000 times 31,500,000 times the 186,000 miles light travels in one second.

Obviously scientists are not having difficulties in believing in this incredibly sudden emergence of the universe. What many refuse to believe is the idea that the many varieties of life emerged suddenly on earth. Most of all, most scientists today are very sure that no intelligence could possibly be involved in the very slow and lengthy development of life on earth. Yet, paradoxically, they are conversely very sure, also, that millions of dollars invested in huge radio telescopes in Florida—set to listen for coded sounds from outer space—is an activity very likely to establish the existence of intelligent life “out there.”

That is, some evidence of coded signals coming from outer space will be for them enough to establish life out in space while the boundlessly complex human cell is not evidence enough to establish intelligence in life on earth.

One thing that is quite unfortunate is the widespread assumption that the Bible itself disallows any kind of lengthy development of life. As I tried to indicate in an earlier issue, “The Most Precarious Frontier,” (and again on p. 72) that what the Bible describes in its first chapter is very likely a recent re-creation of non-carnivorous life, and that Genesis 1:1 follows, not precedes the lengthy pattern of life development displayed in the crust of the earth.

As I see it, it does little good to say that all those eons of time can be

snuggled into elongated “days” of creation in Genesis. Why? Because the lengthy record of earlier forms of life (thousands of different dinosaurs, for example) is unremittingly a record of fierce, violent, carnivorous life, while the forms of life recreated in Genesis chapter 1 are entirely non-carnivorous, according to the text. That God would begin again as recorded in Genesis with non-carnivorous life is perfectly understandable if earlier creation had been extensively perverted and a new beginning was launched in a destroyed sector of the known world. Thus, Genesis 1:2 is best translated “destruction and desolation” not “formless and void.” Genesis 1:1 “bara” does not mean created out of nothing but is what a potter does to clay.

By putting the “old earth” before Genesis 1:1 an immense paralyzing weight is lifted from the sincere Bible reader. This way the “young earth” is described right in the Biblical record. The “old earth” precedes the Genesis account.

Far more details are laid out in the book reviewed next.

Frontiers in Mission, Ralph D. Winter, Pasadena: William Carey International University, 2005, pp. 312.

—Reviewed by Ralph D. Winter

This is not so much a coherent book as it is a collection of papers collected under six headings, displaying a development of thought focusing primarily on remaining barriers to the advance of the Kingdom of God and the vanquishing of evil. The chapters are listed below.

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New from William Carey International University Press



Frontiers in Mission contains 312 pages of fairly recent “out of the box” writings by Ralph Winter on new dimensions of missions, as prepared for a course taught at the Columbia International University (South Carolina) in January 2005.

\$12 postpaid.



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