

In the beginning Genesis 1:1

Ellen White

In the beginning the Father and the Son had **rested upon the Sabbath** after Their **work of creation**. When "the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them" (Genesis 2:1), the Creator and all heavenly beings rejoiced in contemplation of the glorious scene. "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7... {DA 769.2}

Genesis 1:1-30

[Gen 1:1-30](#)

PP-Chap. 2 - The Creation

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "For He spake, and it was;" "He commanded, and it stood fast." [Psa 33:6](#), [Psa 33:9](#). **He "laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever."** [Psa 104:5](#). {PP 44.1}

"In the beginning God." Genesis 1:1. Here alone can the mind in its eager questioning, fleeing as the dove to the ark, find rest. Above, beneath, beyond, abides Infinite Love, working out all things to accomplish "the good pleasure of His goodness." 2 Thessalonians 1:11. {Ed 134.2}

"The invisible things of Him since **the creation of the world** are . . . perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity." Romans 1:20, R.V. But their testimony can be understood only through the aid of the divine Teacher. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." 1 Corinthians 2:11. {Ed 134.3}

Concerning the condition of the earth "**in the beginning**," the Bible record says that it "**was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep**." ... {GC 658.3}

The Creation of the World

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Genesis 1:1. {LHU 47.1}

The Father and the Son engaged in the mighty, wondrous work they had contemplated--of creating the world. The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful. There were mountains and hills and plains; and interspersed among them were rivers and bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain, but the monotony of the scenery was broken by hills and mountains, not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth. The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains were adorned with plants and flowers, and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger and much more beautiful than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. **Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God.** {LHU 47.2}

In the beginning, God made man in His own likeness. Our first parents listened to the voice of the tempter and yielded to the power of Satan. .. {9T 283.2}

Early Seventh Day Adventist Pioneers

JN Andrews

The first chapter of Genesis contains a record which commences with what the Holy Spirit calls "**THE BEGINNING.**" ***Of what is this the beginning?*** Of eternity? Mr. F. will not assert it, though he places this beginning in eternity; i.e., he asserts that the events of the six days of creation belong not to time, but to eternity. Perhaps Mr. F. will say that "THE BEGINNING," is simply the beginning of our world's history. But is it not true that God caused Moses to count time from that very point? What if Adam could not of his own knowledge count the number of days which preceded his existence? Could not Moses do it by the Spirit of inspiration? And cannot we do it now by Moses' help? {1870 JNA, SOSL 176.8}

But observe, Mr. F. has the last six days of the eternity of the past, numbered, measured, and recorded. ***Then he teaches that time begins where those six days end.*** But is not eternity, as distinguished from time, ***unmeasured duration?*** And is not time, as distinguished from eternity, ***that part of duration which is measured by the Bible?*** And if these definitions be accepted as just, is it not manifest that "THE BEGINNING," of which Moses speaks, ***is the commencement of measured duration;*** i.e., the beginning of time, the point which marked it, being the creative word that gave existence to the heavens and the earth? {1870 JNA, SOSL 177.1}

Mr. F. says that the six days of Gen.1, are the last six days of the eternity of the past; ***we say that they are the first six days of time.*** Which is right? If the remarks already made have failed to settle the question, let the reader give attention to the following point which cannot be evaded. Mr. F. acknowledges the rest-day of the Creator to belong to time, but he denies this of the days which God employed in the work of creation. But observe that ***the day of God's rest is called the seventh day.*** Gen.2:1-3. ***This shows that the rest day of the Lord belongs to a series which commenced with what Moses calls "THE BEGINNING."*** Mr. F. must therefore admit that the six days belong to time, or else assert that the ***seventh day belongs to eternity.*** As he cannot ascribe the seventh day to eternity, he must acknowledge the six days of creation to be the first six days of time. {1870 JNA, SOSL 177.2}

Roswell Fenner Cottrell

Let us now look for the law of God in that part of the Bible called the Old Testament. ***The book of Genesis is a brief history of events, beginning with the creation of the world,*** Gen. xix. {1855 RFC, BIC 10.1}

Uriah Smith

Thus are we brought to the ***epoch of the creation of our world.*** The scriptures already referred to, show us the part Christ bore in this display of almighty power. ***When, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*** (Genesis 1), Christ was the creative agent through whom it was accomplished: for "without him was not anything made that was made." John1:3. When the Spirit of God moved, or brooded, upon the face of the waters, it was the Spirit of Christ, with its vivifying power, that hovered over the deep. When God said, "Let there be light" (Gen.1:3), and "light was," it was Christ's voice that spoke. "That God," said Luther, "which speaks not out of Christ's mouth, is not God." And when God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good, it was Christ's eyes that swept over the glorious scene. When the "morning stars sang together, and all the

sons of God shouted for joy," it was Christ's work, the glory of which they were chanting in celestial shout and song. Job 38:4-7. When he spoke, and it was done, and commanded, and it stood fast (Ps.33:6-9), **it was Christ who pronounced the omnific word.** {1898 UrS, LUJ 13.2}

Objection 3. "The creation of the world, according to the account of Moses, took place but about **six thousand years ago.** But the science of geology affords abundance of evidence that this world must have existed **millions of ages.**" {March 12, 1861 UrSe, ARSH 130.5}

*Answer. **The first chapter of Genesis, in its details, is not an account of the original creation of the globe, but of its adaption to its present purposes,** and of the introduction of man upon its surface. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." **When was "the beginning?"** Does Moses say it was but six thousand years ago? No such thing. Moses says not one word upon the subject. **For aught we are told,** it may have been millions of ages. {March 12, 1861 UrSe, ARSH 130.6}*

*"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." **How long had the earth remained this shapeless mass of inorganic matter?** The Bible does not inform us. **For aught we can tell,** it may have been through the long lapse of many ages. Moses simply informs us that the earth had been created "in the beginning," and was in this situation when God said, "Let there be light." {March 12, 1861 UrSe, ARSH 130.7}*

*But here again science appears in attestation of the truth of scripture. By a process of investigation of petrified bones and organic remains, which it is not necessary here to endeavor to explain, the most eminent geologists are satisfied that the human race cannot have existed on this globe for a longer period than that asserted by Moses. **Thus science, instead of contradicting the Mosaic account, gives whatever influence she has in its favor.** {March 12, 1861 UrSe, ARSH 130.8}*

EJ Waggoner

It must be known to every reader of the Bible that **from the beginning the days of the week were known only by number, as first, second, third,** etc. Only one was named, and that was the seventh. Its name was Sabbath, and of course it is so still. See the first chapter of Genesis, and Ex. 20:8-11. Yet, in reality "Sabbath" is not the name, but only the description of the seventh day. The word "Sabbath" simply tells what the day is—a rest; for Sabbath is the Hebrew word for rest. {July 18, 1904 EJW, BEST 347.3}

The Father Himself addresses the Son as God and as Creator. The first chapter of Hebrews says that God has not at any time said to any of the angels, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." And He has also said to the Son, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thine hands." 3 So we are well assured that when we read in the first chapter of Genesis, **"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," it refers to God in Christ.** {1893 EJW, GOSC 14.1}

When does the day begin? At evening, according to the record in Genesis 1; and Lev. 23:32 we read that the Jews are directed to celebrate their Sabbaths "from even unto even," and this could not be unless they regarded other days as beginning at the same time. But why is this? Is it an arbitrary requirement? or is there a fixed reason why the day begins at

evening? It is not an arbitrary matter, but the natural day begins at evening because it cannot by any possibility begin at any other time. With the earth was created "darkness was upon the face of the deep." **The phrase, "in the beginning," marks the beginning of time, as distinguished from God's eternity. The speaking of the matter of the earth into existence, marked the beginning of the first day of time.** {December 29, 1887 EJW, SITI 795.3}

"In the Beginning" The Signs of the Times 14, 8.

The brother who sent the following questions, says that there has been some dispute over them in the Sabbath-school:- {February 24, 1888 EJW, SITI 118.24}

"1. **What does 'in the beginning' refer to in the first verse of the Bible?** to the beginning of the first week or to some other time? {February 24, 1888 EJW, SITI 118.25}

*"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1:1. In the beginning of what? Not of God's existence, because he is from eternity. Not the beginning of eternity, because eternity has no beginning. **Then the text must mean that in the beginning of time God created the heaven and the earth.** {February 24, 1888 EJW, SITI 118.28}*

"2. **Was the earth created during the first week, or was it simply fitted up then,** and created ages before? {February 24, 1888 EJW, SITI 118.26}

Time, then, begun with the first act of the creation of this earth. Now read the first verses of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." Gen. 1:1-5. {February 24, 1888 EJW, SITI 118.29}

Here we have the work of the first day. What was it? It was the creation of the heaven and the earth, the creation of light, and the separating of the light from the darkness, thus forming day and night. The measurement of time by days and nights must, of course, have begun as soon as time began. **So "in the beginning" refers to the first day of the first week of time, in which the heaven and the earth were created.** {February 24, 1888 EJW, SITI 118.30}

"3. Were the sun and moon created during the first week, as the Bible says, or were they created ages before?" {February 24, 1888 EJW, SITI 118.27}

*"Were the sun and moon created during the first week, as the Bible says, or were they created ages before?" We are quite inclined to believe that it was just as the Bible says. We know it is not fashionable nowadays to believe the Bible in all particulars, and those who do so are considered as old-fogyish; **but we have never yet found any more reliable authority than the Bible.** We would advise our Sabbath-schools to **stick to the Bible,** and not to run after the speculations of "science, falsely so-called." W. {February 24, 1888 EJW, SITI 118.31}*

Recent Seventh Day Adventist Authors

Leroy Edwin Froom

Three "Heavens and Earths" -- Past, Present, Future

To understand the problem of the thief in Paradise, it is necessary first to understand the background of the three heavens and earths. First of all, **"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"** (Genesis 1:1). Then Peter tells of two heavens and earths: "The antediluvian heaven and earth" -- "The heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Peter 3:5,6). **These were the first.** Those that followed the Flood, Peter calls "the heavens and the earth, which are now" (2 Peter 3:7), the next matching pair. {1966 LEF, CFF1 273.3}

Robert Pierson

GC President Robert Pierson also voiced support for biblical protology. He said on October 12, 1978:

Already, brethren and sisters, there are subtle forces that are beginning to stir. Regrettably there are those in the church who belittle the inspiration of the total Bible, who scorn the first 11 chapters of Genesis, who question the Spirit of Prophecy's short chronology of the age of the earth, and who subtly and not so subtly attack the Spirit of Prophecy. There are some who point to the reformers and contemporary theologians as a source and the norm for Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. There are those who allegedly are tired of the hackneyed phrases of Adventism. There are those who wish to forget the standards of the church we love. There are . . . those who would throw off the mantle of a peculiar people; and those who would go the way of the secular, materialistic world.

Fellow leaders, beloved brethren and sisters—don't let it happen! I appeal to you as earnestly as I know how this morning—don't let it happen! I appeal to Andrews University, to the Seminary, to Loma Linda University— don't let it happen! We are not Seventh-day Anglicans, not Seventh-day Lutherans—we are Seventh-day Adventists! This is God's last church with God's last message!

Ryan Tacklin

Genesis 1:1 is likely talking about perhaps our Milky Way Galaxy at most, and not the entire universe and all that it contains. What gets re-created or destroyed in the end? I believe it is only what is associated with the creation of this earth and contaminated with sin. Maybe the universe was already created and some of the galaxies, stars, other words etc before getting to created our earth, solar system, and maybe the Milky Way was included with that. The other theory is that there is an untold time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Perhaps creation of others planets were taking place and before getting to this earth that was put into place in 1:1. We are given so little detail outside of our earth's history from the 7 day creation I can't say that I understand it all. But obviously I would imagine that there was some space of time from the very beginning of all created things by Christ to our earth; and prior to all of that the Word was with God. And this Word was Christ who was begotten of God. [On Messenger October 4th 2020]

The following article from Ministry Magazine is worthy of Consideration [Emphasis by Sami LW]

<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2005/06/in-the-beginning-god....html>

Editorial Note: While this paper, now in article form, is not one that was presented at any of the Faith and Science Conferences convened over the last three years, it is one that was presented in appropriate venues during this time period and has had its influence on the dialogue. We believe that it contributes to our self-understanding as Seventh-day Adventists when it comes to the issues of creation, evolution, faith, and science. It is therefore included in our Ministry Faith and Science series.

At its 1980 world session in Dallas, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists officially voted the church's statement of faith in terms of 27 fundamental beliefs.

Belief No. 6 states: "God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made 'the heaven and the earth' and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was 'very good,' declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3)."

This statement spells out that Seventh-day Adventists believe (a) that God created heaven and earth and all that is ***therein in six days***, and (b) that the Sabbath is a continual reminder of the six-day creation.

On the basis of biblical chronology and some statements of Ellen White, Seventh-day Adventists have tradition ally believed that this creation took place about 6000 years ago.

TRADITIONAL CREATION MODELS AMONG ADVENTISTS

Two different views in regard to the creation record of Genesis 1 have prevailed in the Adventist Church.

1. *The Adventist gap theory.* This view understands Genesis 1:1 as a reference to the creation of the universe including the earth in its ***raw state billions of years ago***. Several thousand years ago the Holy Spirit hovered above the waters and the six-day creation took place. ***This view was predominant among Adventist pioneers.*** M. C. Wilcox in 1898 wrote, "***When did God create, or bring into existence, the heaven and the earth? 'In the beginning.' When this 'beginning' was, how long a period it covered, it is idle to conjecture; for it is not revealed. That it was a period which antedated the six days' work is evident.***" [M.C. Wilcox, "The Gospel in Genesis One," The Signs of the Times, 24.27 (July 7, 1898): 16.]

The same view is found among Adventists today. For example, Clyde Webster, former associate director of the Geo-Science Research Institute, in his book The Earth writes, "***There is no reference in Scripture within creation week that addresses the creation of water or the mineral content of dry land. . . . The only reference made to their creation is 'in the beginning.' It seems possible then that the elementary inorganic matter is not bound by a limited age as is the living matter.***" [Clyde E. Webster, The Earth (Silver Spring: Office of Education, NAD, 1989), 43.]

More recently, at the 2002 General Conference-sponsored Faith and Science Conference, Richard Davidson from Andrews University stated that "[T]he biblical text of Genesis 1 leaves room for either (a) young pre-fossil rock, created as part of the seven days of creation (with apparent old age), or (b) **much older pre-fossil earth rock, with a long interval between the creation of the inanimate 'raw materials' on earth described in Genesis 1:1, 2 and the seven days of Creation week described in Genesis 1:3ff (which I find the preferable interpretation).**" [Richard Davidson, "The Biblical Account of Origins." Paper presented at the Faith and Science Conference, August 23-29, 2002 in Ogden, Utah, 29.]

Contrary to the gap or ruin-restoration theory of the Scofield Bible, Seventh-day Adventists do not believe that life existed on earth prior to Genesis 1. Only nonfossil bearing rock can be billions of years old. While this is a possibility, **Genesis 1:1-3 does not indicate that there is a gap between verses 1 and 2.** Furthermore, Exodus 20:11 says "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them." This text seems to say that within six days God created everything connected with our earth. **At any rate, the gap view does not really help us when it comes to the fossil bearing geologic column, since death can have occurred only after the Fall.**

2. *The original Creation account.* **This view sees the six-day Creation week beginning in verse 1, not in verse 3.** In other words, **"heaven and earth" in verse 1 refers only to our planetary system or our Milky Way and not to the universe as a whole.** The reason is that in Isaiah 65:17 and Revelation 21:1 "heaven and earth" do not refer to a re-creation of the universe but only to that part of the universe contaminated by sin.

This was J. N. Andrews's view. He believed that the universe was created on day one. "If we could be placed back some 6,000 years in the past, and from that point survey the vast abyss of space now studded with the stars of heaven, what should we behold? Blank nothing. The host of heaven did not then exist. Our earth itself had not risen into being. The vast infinity of space was literally, as Job expresses it, 'the empty place,' and that which filled it was 'nothing' Job 26:7. Utter and profound darkness rested upon the great void. **Even the materials which subsequently formed the worlds had no existence.**" [J.N. Andrews, "The Memorial of Creation," Review and Herald 43.17 (April 7, 1874): 129.]

Ellen White wrote in 1904, in connection with the pantheism crisis, **"The theory that God did not create matter when He brought the world into existence is without foundation. In the formation of our world, God was not indebted to pre-existing matter."** Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 8 vols. (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), 8.258.]

While this statement can be used by both positions, in view of all her other statements on creation, I believe she held the second view. Whatever the case, both positions hold to a six-day Creation and see the Creation account as the basis for the Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20.

EVOLUTION AND THE ADVENTIST CHURCH

Until the 1950s Adventists on the whole accepted one or the other of the two creation models. During the last few decades, however, **some Adventists have begun introducing a third creation model theistic evolution.** This is an attempt to harmonize evolutionary biology with the Christian faith.

In 1957 the General Conference established the Geoscience Research Institute, located today on the campus of Loma Linda University in California. "The institute focuses mainly

on the biological, geological, and paleontological questions regarding the origin of life and the past history of our planet in the context of the Creation account given in the book of Genesis." [Seventh Day Adventist Encyclopedia, second rev. ed Commentary Reference Series, vol 10 (Hagerstown, MD Review and Herald, 1996), 599.]

During the first two decades of its work, tensions existed among the scientists of the institute because of different views on how to interpret the past. Some took the statements of Scripture and Ellen White **seriously and attempted to interpret the facts of science accordingly.** Others were willing to consider **seriously "evidence from radioactive time clocks that placed 'Creation Week hundreds of millions of years ago' "** [Ron Numbers, *The Creationists* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1992), 292.] and searched for ways to interpret Scripture in the light of this view.

In time, **all the so-called progressive scientists left the institute,** and around 1980, when Ariel Roth became director of the institute, **only scientists who accepted the Scriptural record as it reads were on the staff.** In Adventist schools and universities, however, the picture was different. **A number of science teachers tended to lean more and more toward theistic evolution.**

The Geoscience Research Institute organized field conferences in North America, Europe, and Australia that informed the leadership of the church, teachers, and ministers about the **problems of the evolutionary theory and offered a solution to the geologic column on the basis of the biblical flood.**

On one of these tours in 1977 the General Conference president Robert Pierson realized that **some of our scientists tended toward theistic evolution.** He asked the vice presidents Duncan Eva, Willis Hackett, and Richard Hammill to formulate two doctrinal points, **one about inspiration and the other about creation, which the scientists and Bible teachers in our schools should accept.** "Their efforts on behalf of Pierson's 'creedal statement' prompted one campus theologian to confess that he **could see no substantive difference between the actions of the General Conference president and those of the pope.**" [James L. Hayward, ed, *Creation Reconsidered* (Roseville, Calif. Association of Adventists Forums, 2000), 12.]

About the same time that Ariel Roth became director of the Geoscience Research Institute, Gerhard Hasel became dean of the theological seminary at Andrews. Through these appointments Elder Pierson hoped to contain the pluralism among the theologians and scientists.

The progressive or more liberal thinking scholars and scientists, however, were frustrated. They turned to Richard Ritland, who had retired in 1982, and asked him to organize a field conference for the Association of Adventist Forums. The conference took place in 1985 with about 100 participants. For ten days they studied the geological formations in Utah and Wyoming and another five days were spent at a study conference in Yellowstone Park. "Conference presenters dealt with three themes: earth history, the biblical record, and responses by Christians seeking to reconcile their faith with the evidence from science." [_____, "The Many Faces of Adventist Creationism," *Spectrum* 25:3 (March 1996), 25]

A report of this field conference, published in *Spectrum*, stated, "The conference generated some feeling of apprehension, partly because not all the familiar answers seemed adequate to explain what we saw, and because participants were concerned that the issue of origins might be divisive for the Adventist Church." [Karen Bottomley, "Pilgrimage in the Rockies: The AAF Geology Tour," *Spectrum* 16:4 (1985), 26.]

The concern was justified. At a Geoscience field conference in 1991, which newly elected General Conference president Robert Folkenberg attended, Ariel Roth informed the participants that **a number of Adventist scientists had become theistic evolutionists**. Then in the year 2000, the Association of Adventist Forums published the book *Creation Reconsidered*, which contains the 28 lectures given at the 1985 Yellowstone conference. **A number of the contributors to this volume advocate theistic evolution**.

TWO VIEWS IN THE CHURCH TODAY

Based on recent publications of Adventist theologians and scientists in regard to creation we can say that today there are basically two views in the Adventist Church. **One sees creation extending over millions of years; the other holds to a six-day Creation several thousand years ago**.

Representatives of theistic evolution

Richard M. Ritland (a retired biologist who taught at Loma Linda and Andrews). At the field conference in 1985, in his lecture on the geologic column, which seems to indicate that **life on earth existed millions of years ago**, he traced the development and the evidences for the geologic column. He concluded by saying, "Like a clock for organizing the day, the geologic column has become like a calendar for relating and organizing the vast body of information and theories that has become the essential core to which the records of earth history relate. It has become an indispensable tool, not only for general studies but also for those special areas related to the flow of energy and life throughout time, to origins, to time, to evolutionary change all of immediate concern to those probing the meaning of life, existence, and the governance of the cosmos." [Richard M. Ritland, "The Geologic Column" in Hayward, ed. *Creation Reconsidered*, 34.]

Richard Bottomley (a geophysicist at the Canadian University College). At the same conference, he dealt with the topic of dating the rocks. After explaining the radioactive dating methods, he showed that fossil-bearing rocks have a certain sequence the bottom rock must have been laid down before the younger rock on top of it. Since the dates for the individual layers are spread over **hundreds of millions of years, he concluded that the layers of rock "do represent long intervals of time and that the rocks involved could not have been deposited over a short period of time,"** [____ "Age Dating of Rocks" in Hayward, ed , *Creation Reconwlerett*, 75] as most Adventists believe happened during the Flood.

Richard L. Hammill (former president of Andrews, General Conference vice president). After his retirement, Dr. Hammill studied scientific theories (plate tectonics, fossils, radioactive dating, etc.). After nine years of study he came to the conclusion that **"animals were living on the earth millions of years ago before these [continental] plates separated**. And, moreover, as I got to looking into the geologic column, I had to recognize . . . that the geologic column is valid, that **some forms of life were extinct before other forms of life came into existence**. The steadily accumulating evidence in the natural world has forced a reevaluation in the way I look and understand and interpret parts of the Bible." [Quoted in Hayward, *Spetttrtm* 25 3 (1996). 27, 2B] He called himself a progressive creationist.

Fritz Guy (a theologian at La Sierra University). At the Faith and Science Conference in 2002, Dr. Guy presented a lecture, "Interpreting Genesis One in the Twenty-First Century," that was later published in *Spectrum*. He interprets Genesis 1 theologically, i.e., he sees Genesis 1 **"not as a literalistic description of a process, but as 'a spiritual**

interpretation of the universe's origin, nature, and destiny." That means "read theologically, the explanation of creation in Genesis 1 is complementary also to a scientific explanation of the history of the cosmos, the earth, life, and humanity. Taking the two explanations together **'yields an intellectually satisfying and spiritually illuminating account of creation.'**" As far as Ellen White is concerned, he believes that if she were living now, knowing what we know today about natural history, "**she would undoubtedly avoid making a divisive issue of the interpretation of Genesis 1.**" [Fritz Guy, "Interpreting Genesis One in the Twenty-First Century," Spectrum 31 2 (Spring 200J), 11-13]

Representatives of a six-day Creation

Jim Gibson (biologist and director of the Geoscience Research Institute). In 1998, at the European Geoscience field conference Jim Gibson stated that "the long-age viewpoint makes certain unfavorable implications about the character of God and the reliability of the Bible. **Since I give epistemological primacy to the Scriptures, I accept the Genesis record as a matter of faith. Having adopted that position, I am encouraged that much of the evidence claimed to support long ages can be reinterpreted in the context of a short chronology.**" [Jim Gibson, "Why a Creation Conference" (Geoscience Research Institute, Unpublished manuscript), 19]

Randall Younker (archaeologist at Andrews University with a background in biology). At Andrews University, he and John Baldwin teach the course "Issues in Origin" in which they present the traditional creationist viewpoint. Younker wrote the Sabbath School quarterly on creation for the fourth quarter of 1999. In the introduction to the lesson he states, "**Seventh-day Adventists take Genesis 1-11 as an accurate historical account of origins of life on earth. We accept the biblical account's straightforward testimony that the creation of life on this planet and its various habitats occurred in six literal, 24-hour days.** Based on the available biblical data, we also believe that the period of time since the Creation has been a **short chronology of a few thousand years, as opposed to millions of years required by the general theory of evolution.**" [Randall Younker, God's Creation, Sabbath School Study Guide for the third quarter 1999 (Silver Spring Genera! Conference!, 1999), 4]

Leonard Brand (biologist at Loma Linda University). In the introduction to his book Faith, Reason, and Earth History he writes that "a central thesis of this book is that a creationist can indeed be an effective scientist." Leonard Brand, Faith, and Reason, Earth History (Berrien Springs, Mich.. Andrews University Press, 1997), viii]. He champions interventionism, a view of history that recognizes the important role of intelligent intervention in history. In the chapter on faith and science he says in regard to geology, "Science has proposed a theory that fossil-bearing geologic deposits have accumulated over hundreds of millions of years. **I conclude that the Bible indicates that current geological theory, in certain respects, is an incorrect interpretation of the data. Our task is to go back to the research lab and develop a more correct theory.**" [Leonard Brand, Faith, and Reason, Earth History (Berrien Springs, Mich.. Andrews University Press, 1997), 95]

Richard Davidson (theologian at Andrews University). Davidson is a proponent of the Adventist gap theory, i.e., **Genesis 1:1 speaks about the creation of the universe; only from verse 3 on is the creation week in view.** In regard to the interpretation of Genesis 1 he says, "Based upon the testimony of the Genesis account and later intertextual allusions to this account, **I must affirm the literal, historical nature of Genesis 1 and 2, with a literal Creation week consisting of six consecutive, contiguous, creative, natural 24-hour days, followed immediately by a literal**

24-hour seventh day, during which God rested, blessed, and sanctified the Sabbath as a memorial of creation." [Richard M Davidson, "The Biblical Account of Origins" Unpublished paper presented at the International Faith and Science Conference 2002 at Ogden, Utah, 22]

The view of Jack Provonsha; In the face of scientific facts, a six-day Creation a few thousand years ago is no longer acceptable to many Adventist scholars and scientists. On the other hand, conservative Adventist scholars cannot accept any view that posits death before human beings lived on the earth, because Paul in Romans 5:12 says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (NKJV).

The Loma Linda physician and theologian Jack Provonsha, therefore, has proposed a different solution. He has suggested that Adventists consider the ruin-restoration theory as propounded by the Scofield Bible. According to this view, when Lucifer was cast out of heaven to the earth he was given a long time to work out his principles. **"This included genetic experimentation resulting in the evolutionary process which ultimately led to the development of human-like apes. At some more recent time, Provonsha suggested, God stepped in and created the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve."** [Hayward, Spectrum 25.3 (1996) 22]

Although this view combines the conservative view with the scientific data of death before Adam, **it has received little support from either side.**

RECENT FAITH AND SCIENCE CONFERENCES

At the Annual Council in 2001 the General Conference Executive Committee organized a series of conferences on faith and science during the years 2002-2004. The first one in 2002 was an international conference in Ogden, Utah. More than 80 scientists, theologians, and church administrators from different parts of the world began discussing the interrelationship between faith and science. Topics ranged from the hominid fossil record to Ellen White's view of science. The conference revealed the seriousness and breadth of differences concerning questions of origin that are present in the Adventist community today.

During 2003 and the first half of 2004 most divisions held similar faith and science conferences in their territories. The formal discussions came to an end in August 2004 at the second international conference in Denver, Colorado. "The new element in this conference was a discussion on the ethics of dissent dealing with the ethical responsibility of those who differ in significant ways from the biblical position of the church on the topic of creation. The discussion was open, candid, and highly professional. **It was obvious that a small number of individuals scientists and theologians did not support or felt uncomfortable with the biblical doctrine of creation in six literal, consecutive days as clearly revealed in Genesis 1.**" [Angel M. Rodriguez, "Second international Faith and Science Conference A Report," Reflections 9 (Jan 2005) 2.]

There was no attempt on the part of church leaders to modify or change our fundamental belief on Creation. This was clearly stated by Elder Jan Paulsen, the General Conference president, before the discussions were initiated. However, such discussions cannot be avoided because the theory of evolution and the Adventist doctrine of creation represent two antagonistic and fundamentally diverse worldviews. **Unfortunately, theistic evolution is one view that is being held and taught by a number of Seventh-day Adventists today.**

Secondly, **it is important for the church to be aware that neither evolutionists nor creationists have all the answers in the debate.** These conferences provided a proper environment to discuss these questions while at the same time holding to our faith commitment.

The report of the International Faith and Science Conference Organizing Committee to the 2004 Autumn Council of the General Conference stated that while there is widespread affirmation of the Church's position on Creation, **"[W]e recognize that some among us interpret the biblical record in ways that lead to sharply different conclusions."** ["An Affirmation of Creation," Report of the International Faith and Science Conference of Organizing Committee, 5.]

The Annual Council, after careful discussion, produced a response to the report in which the Council strongly endorsed the Church's historic, biblical position of belief in a literal, recent, six day creation. **"We reaffirm the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the historicity of Genesis 1-11: that the seven days of the Creation account were literal 24-hour days forming a week identical in time to what we now experience as a week; and that the Flood was global in nature."** ["Response to an Affirmation of Creation," Annual Council 2004, 1.] The response also called upon all boards and teachers at our schools to uphold and advocate the Church's position on origins.

The last few years have shown that there are a number of views on creation within the Adventist Church. Not all of them can be right. **Should theistic evolution become more and more accepted, we will be in danger of losing the biblical foundation for the Sabbath and our understanding of salvation.**

Without the Creation week the Sabbath becomes a Jewish institution, and if death existed long before the appearance of man, there was no Fall in Eden and therefore there is no need for salvation. Then Paul was in error when he wrote: "Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

Varied views of Non-Seventh Day Adventist Scholars

Adam Clarke Commentary

The heaven and the earth - As the word שמים shamayim is plural, we may rest assured that it means *more than the atmosphere*, to express which some have endeavored to restrict its meaning. Nor does it appear that the atmosphere is particularly intended here, as this is spoken of, [Gen 1:6](#), under the term firmament. **The word heavens must therefore comprehend the whole solar system**, as it is very likely the whole of this was created in these six days; for unless the earth had been the center of a system, the reverse of which is sufficiently demonstrated, it would be unphilosophic to suppose it was created independently of the other parts of the system, as on this supposition we must have recourse to the almighty power of God to suspend the influence of the earth's gravitating power till the fourth day, when the sun was placed in the center, round which the earth began then to revolve. **But as the design of the inspired penman was to relate what especially belonged to our world and its inhabitants, therefore he passes by the rest of the planetary system, leaving it simply included in the plural word heavens**. In the word earth every thing relative to the terraqueaerial globe is included, that is, all that belongs to the solid and fluid parts of our world with its surrounding atmosphere. As therefore I suppose the **whole solar system** was created at this time, I think it perfectly in place to give here a general view of all the planets, with every thing curious and important hitherto known relative to their revolutions and principal affections.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary:

Ge 1:1, 2. THE CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

1. In the beginning--a **period of remote and unknown antiquity, hid in the depths of eternal ages**; and so the phrase is used in **Proverbs 8:22, 23**.

The heaven and the earth--the universe; this first verse is a general introduction to the inspired volume, declaring the great and important truth that all things had a beginning; that nothing throughout the wide extent of nature existed from eternity, originated by chance, or from the skill of any inferior agent; but that the whole universe was produced by the creative power of God (Ac 17:24; Ro 11:36). After this preface, the narrative is confined to the earth.

Albert Barnes

שמים *shāmāyî m*, “skies, heavens,” being the “high” (*shamay*, “be high,” Arabic) or the “airy” region; the overarching dome of space, with all its revolving orbs.

GreatTexts

“*The heaven and the earth*” does not mean the chaotic mass, the rough material, so to speak, **but the whole cosmos**, the universe as it appears in its present order. This is the common mode of expression in Hebrew for what we call the universe. The nearest approach to this idea of “universe” is found in [Jer 10:16](#), where the English versions have “all things,” the Hebrew being literally “the whole.” Taking the first verse as complete in itself, we have here the broad general statement of creation; then follows the early dark, empty, lifeless condition, not of the whole, but of the earth; and then the gradual preparation of the earth to be the abode of man. The history of the visible heavens and earth is bound together throughout Scripture till the final consummation, when the heavens shall be rolled together

as a scroll: the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up, to make way for the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The conception which we express by the term “universe” is usually expressed in the Old Testament by this phrase, “the heaven and the earth.” But there is a still more complete expression: “heaven above, earth beneath, and the water under the earth” ([Exo 20:4](#)). A similar phrase is found on the Assyrian Creation-tablet: “the heaven above, the earth beneath” (line 1), and “the ocean” (line 3).

F.B. Meyer [This is my best Commentary on Genesis 1:1]

All beginnings must begin with God. Always put God first. The first stone in every building, our first thought every morning, the first aim and purpose of all activity. Begin the book of the year with God, and you will end it with the glory of the New Jerusalem. At first, as in the physical creation, your heart and life may seem to be “without form and void.” Do not be discouraged, the Spirit of God is within you, brooding amid the darkness, and presently His Light will shine through. It is the blessed presence of the Lord Jesus that stirs in your heart and will presently rule your life, [Joh 1:4](#). His Presence divides between the good and evil. You must distinguish between Christ and self. Follow the gleam, and you shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. God’s days begin in evenings, and always end in mornings.

Matthew Poole

Time: BC 4004

In the beginning, to wit, ***of time and things***, in the first place, before things were distinguished and perfected in manner hereafter expressed. Or the sense is this; the beginning of the world was thus. And this phrase further informeth us, that the world, and all things in it, had a beginning, and were not from eternity, as some philosophers dreamed.

God created the heaven and the earth; made out of nothing, either

Beginning: [Pro 8:22-24](#), [Pro 16:4](#); [Mar 13:19](#); [Joh 1:1-3](#); [Heb 1:10](#); [1Jn 1:1](#)

1. The heaven and earth as now they are with their inhabitants. So this verse is a summary or brief of what is particularly declared in the rest of this chapter. Or,
2. The substance and common matter of heaven and earth. Which seems more probably by comparing this verse with the next, where the **earth** here mentioned is declared to be *without form*, and the heavens without light; as also with [Gen 2:1](#), where *the heavens and the earth*, here only said to be created, are said to be *finished* or *perfected*. **Yet I conceive the third heaven to be included under the title of the heaven, and to have been created and perfected the first day, together with its blessed inhabitants the holy angels, as may be collected from [Job 33:6-7](#)**. But the Scripture being written for men, and not for angels, the Holy Ghost **thought it sufficient to comprehend them and their dwelling-place under that general term of the heavens, and proceedeth to give a more particular account of the visible heavens and earth, which were created for the use of man**. In the Hebrew it is, *the heavens and the earth*. For there are three heavens mentioned in Scripture: the aerial; the place of birds, clouds, and meteors, [Mat 26:64](#) [Rev 19:17](#) [Rev 20:9](#). The starry; the region of the sun, the moon, and stars, [Gen 22:17](#). The highest or third heaven, [2Co 12:2](#); the dwelling of the blessed angels.

When Brother RT and CM brought to my attention this verse [Genesis 1:1], I confess I had settled to what it meant by the phrase “in the beginning” and it had never crossed my mind it can bring with it theological implications. After some research, I have come to understand that it is used to suppose theistic evolution [**evolutionary** creationism, or God-guided **evolution** are views that regard religious teachings about God as compatible with modern scientific understanding about biological **evolution**]. Also Brother CM brought to my attention that is used to support the “flat earth theory”.

Based on the facts that I have gone through, I believe there is no gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, 3 but this beginning is the beginning of the time, the creating of this earth in six days. I don't see any ties between Genesis and the Johannine Prologue paralleling Proverbs 8 and maybe 30:4. These other three passages complement each other but Genesis 1:1 is not part of those passages that speak of “olam”. Hence I will stick to the belief that Genesis 1:1 is the beginning or step 1 as Brother CM puts it of the creation story of this earth until some facts are brought forth which are contrary to the ones I hold.

Blessings **Sami LW**

NB

The following link has some valuable information

<https://thecompassmagazine.com/blog/the-evolution-of-adventists-creation-belief-statement>