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Creation Ministries International Creation 2015 Superconference

By Dan Reynolds

Dr. Dan Reynolds attended the recent Creation Superconference held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina July 13-17. Dr. Reynolds has provided us a summary of each of the sessions at the conference.

My wife, Cassie, and I recently spent a week in Myrtle Beach where I attended 19 of 20 talks on creation and related topics given at the Creation Ministry International (CMI) Creation 2015 Family Superconference. Cassie, while supporting my interest in creation, only attended one session and spent the rest of her time sewing on her portable sewing machine in our hotel room! The conference was held at the Springmaid Beach Resort located right next to the ocean. The accommodations, food, and staff were excellent. Mornings and evenings were filled with talks while afternoons had options for free time, a tour of a nearby aquarium with Dr. Robert Carter of CMI, or playing chess with Jonathan Sarfati, former chess champion of New Zealand. And as usual, there was an extensive bookstore offering hundreds of books and videos, often at reduced prices. I came home with a couple of bags full!

The talks dealt with a broad range of topics such as the age of the earth, problems with evolution, postmodernism, Islam, the new heavens and earth, the starlight-time problem, biomimicry, biblical archeology, UFOs and aliens, intelligent design, formation of the Grand Canyon, dinosaur soft tissue and radiocarbon analysis, and the minds of skeptics. Speakers were available between sessions. Brief speaker bios can be found online (<http://creation.com/conferences/creation2015/speakers.php>). I will briefly summarize below the talks I heard.

The first talk was given by CMI's Scott Gillis and was entitled "The Battle for Origins." According to 1 Pet 3:15, we should always be prepared to give an answer for the hope within us. The doctrine of creation is foundational. Organisms reproduce after their kinds. Operational science operates in the present, is repeatable, testable, and observable. Historical science (forensic science), in contrast, uses facts observable in the present to theorize about the past. In historical science, past events and causes are inferred from present data according to the presuppositions of the observer. Those events and causes are not repeatable and observable. We know there are

millions of marine fossils on mountains tops. Fossils form when organisms are buried rapidly. The 1980 eruption of Mount St Helens demonstrated how much geologic work could be accomplished in a short period of time. These data are consistent with the Flood. Attempting to add millions of years to the Bible does not work theologically. There are no gaps in the genealogies. Putting millions of years before Adam means death came before the Fall and it was not a result of Adam's sin, clearly an unbiblical idea. If there were no Adam and Eve, then the doctrine of original sin is wrong and there is no need for a savior. We must stand ready to cast down unbiblical speculations (2 Cor 10:4-5).

The next talk was given by CMI's Jonathan Sarfati and was entitled "Impossible by Chance." Jono (as he is called by those close to him) said his talk was about chemical evolution (abiogenesis) versus real chemistry. The combination of matter, time, and energy creates a mess, not the organization seen in living things. Life only comes from life. The simplest known organism (Nature 2006 Jan 19; 439: 246), *Mycoplasma genitalium*, is incredibly complex and must have at least 387 protein-coding and 43 RNA-coding genes to function. DNA is for information storage. There must be DNA repair mechanisms present; the accumulated copying errors would otherwise lead to error catastrophe in a few generations. The chemical instabilities of DNA and RNA would not permit them to remain intact 10s of millions of years, yet dinosaur DNA, allegedly 10s of millions of years old, has been found intact (creation.com/dinosaur-bone-cells). The RNA-world hypothesis as an explanation for the origin of life is known to have many problems (Biology Direct 2012, 7:23). Information is not a property of chemistry. There is a difference between order and complexity; many naturally occurring phenomena bring order (crystallization) but not complexity. Crystals are very ordered but carry little information. Information rides on matter but is not reducible to it. Chance is inadequate to build a chemical system with the minimal requirements for life; a system with information storage and processing, protein manufacturing, and an energy source. The Miller-Urey experiments did not show a plausible pathway for abiogenesis. In those experiments, formic acid was formed

and would be fatal to any life. Oxygen was fatal. Water would hydrolyze any nascent proteins. There were many other problems.

The next talk, one of the best at the conference in my opinion, was given by Darrell Furgason and was entitled "Postmodernism and Tolerance." We live in a time of postmodernism, tolerance, and political correctness. Ideas have consequences. God commands us to think; we are at war with ideas (2 Cor 10:3-5; Col 2:8-10). Our best universities were founded on Christianity. All knowledge was *unified* in Christ. We now have what could be called *multiversities*; disciplines are no longer unified. Naturalism is now the center instead of Christ. There are 3 major threats to Christianity today: secular humanism (includes Marxism, postmodernism, atheism), Islam (theistic), and cosmic humanism (Buddhism, pantheism). All non-biblical worldviews are evolutionary. There are false philosophies embedded in these worldviews. There are 4 major non-biblical philosophies at work today: naturalism, scientism, determinism, and postmodernism. Naturalism says that everything reduces to natural causes including life, the universe, and even natural law. Naturalism leads to scientism, the belief that science is the only way to knowledge. Determinism is the idea that all human thought and behavior are derived from evolution. We are programmed by our genes and environment. Free will is an illusion. Hence we are ultimately not responsible for our choices, including sexual orientation. Interestingly, science has not discovered a genetic basis for homosexuality. Tolerance is now seen as the greatest virtue. Postmodernism says there is no absolute truth, everything is relative. Before 1600, religion was the source of truth. From 1600-1960, reason was the source. Since 1960, we have embraced postmodernism. Now there is no meta-narrative, there is no truth. The Bible is now seen as politically incorrect and full of "hate speech." The Bible should be the basis of everything; no one is free to redefine God or the Bible. Christians need to get their minds back: put off falsehood, put on truth. We need to redevelop a Christian mind with God at the center (Ps 24:1). The book *Understanding the Times* by David Noebel was highly recommended. Go to summit.org to learn more.

The next talk was by Keaton Halley and was entitled "The Truth about Dinosaurs." Most churches know nothing about this subject. The Bible gives us the right perspective on dinosaurs; they were created on the sixth day (Gen 1:25). Hence humans and dinosaurs lived at the same time. Initially, the dinosaurs ate plants (Gen 1:30). There was no physical death before sin (Rom 5:12). The fossil record was therefore formed after the Fall. There were dinosaurs on the Ark. The Ark had the space of 522 railroad stock cars. Noah probably took small and young dinosaurs. Probably only 50 kinds were on board. Most dinosaur fossils were from burial of animals during the global Flood. At the Dinosaur National Monument, there are many fossil dinosaurs buried to-

gether, some in the "death throes" posture with the head craned back. This fossil graveyard was clearly laid down by water. Some fighting dinosaurs were buried together. Why haven't human and dinosaur fossils been found together? Probably because humans were better able to escape the Flood. Soft tissue has now been found in fossils of many dinosaur species. DNA has been found in a *T. rex* [Bone 2013;52(1):414]. The iDino Project has found radiocarbon in several dinosaur fossils; an entire issue of the *Creation Research Society Quarterly* was devoted to this work [see CRSQ, Spring 2015;51(4); this can be downloaded for \$8 at crbooks.org/index.php/ebooks/crsq-special-idino-issue-downloadable-version.html]. Dinosaurs lived after the Flood. Scripture refers to them as dragons, behemoth, and leviathan (Ps 148:7, Job 40:15). Could the animal referred to in Job 40:15 have been a Sauropod dinosaur? It ate like an ox, had limbs like bars of iron, and a tail like a cedar tree. Whatever it was, it was not an elephant or hippopotamus. Why are the dinosaurs dead now? Other animals have been found buried with dinosaurs that are still alive today. They may have died off because of a dwindling food supply and being hunted by humans. Dinosaurs are not birds. There are some similarities but the alleged fore-runners of birds were not built for flight. Evolution of scales to feathers is unlikely as they are completely different structures. For example, feathers have interlocking hooks; scales don't. The earliest bird fossils predate the dinosaurs from which they allegedly evolved. Dinosaurs: design (vegetarians), disaster (became carnivorous after the Fall), deluge (Flood), disappearance (began to die), discovered (fossils).

The next talk was by Gary Bates and was entitled "The Dynasties of Ancient Egypt." So far, Egyptian archeology has not turned up any record of the Hebrews in Egypt. Did Egypt exist before the Flood? In Genesis, Egypt is mentioned 79 times, 291 times in the first 5 books. Ground penetrating radar has discovered vast amounts of unearched history; an estimated 80% of what Egypt has to offer still lies beneath the surface, unexplored. The Egyptians were obsessed with life after death. The standard Egyptian chronology goes back to 5000 BC and predates the Flood. The pyramids were made from limestone so must have been built after the Flood. Historical dates are established by astronomical events, pottery, writings, and radiocarbon dating. The Egyptians rarely mentioned their enemies in their writings. They believed that the quality of one's afterlife was a function of how often they were remembered by subsequent generations. Hence the pharaohs built large structures as memorials in the hopes people would remember them. Mentioning an enemy would cause that enemy to be remembered and hence give them aid in the afterlife. Moses never mentioned pharaoh's name. More was said on this subject by Henry Smith and will be discussed later.

The next talk was by Alex McFarland and was entitled “Inside the Mind of the Skeptic.” McFarland quote: “The weakest ink is better than the best memory.” Alex was once a skeptic given to evolution and hedonism. He interviewed 34 atheists. He asked them to dismantle Christianity. He found that in most cases, the skepticism began with some type of pain. We can love without compromising the truth. We all have a God shaped vacuum. You need a relationship to win people to Christ. Inside every cynical person is a disappointed idealist. We need to understand what God will and won’t do. God will only act in accord with His nature, will, and word. His acts must be logically meaningful (so questions like “if God can do anything, can He make a rock so large even He can’t lift it?” are nonsense). He can’t sin. God preserved His word. There are 3 major threats to Christianity in the West today: militant secularism, intolerant homosexuality, and the rise of Islam. Most unbelief is a result of some kind of pain. We must make friendships with unsaved people. People want trust, honesty, and respect. All arguments against the Christian faith have a rational mistake somewhere. We all need acceptance, significance, and security. We need to know we are cared for. Data alone won’t win souls. We need to understand Millennials. Millennials are digital natives, moral libertines, social globalists, and spiritual eclectics. The academy has succumbed to intellectual anarchy. Jesus is not mythology (2 Pet 1:16). We must know our audience. There are several types of skeptics. Skeptics can be tolerant (want everything to be true), sensual (no rules), seeking, or syncretistic (we all get to heaven). Most skeptics are ex-protestants. When engaging skeptics, take one issue at a time. Are they seeking truth or just playing chess with God? They may have “daddy” issues. There are also skeptics that are educated, wounded, frightened, proud, or orphaned. There are skeptics that are angry, Bible “scholars,” antinomian (no rules or laws), and honest (really searching for truth). Four thoughts about the future: (1) people with recurring spiritual doubts will continue to grow in the West, (2) those with doubts will increasingly defy categorization, (3) building authentic relationships will be key to getting folks saved (gospel is established propositionally, shared relationally), and (4) we will need to know apologetics to reach 21st century pagans. We must have both social and apologetic savvy. Love is a commitment to meet others’ needs. We must ask God for wisdom when engaging skeptics (James 1:5).

The next talk was by Stuart Burgess and was entitled “Hallmarks of Design.” Stuart designed rockets and spacecraft for the European Space Agency (ESA). He designed ENVISAT, the largest satellite ever made. He has published 140 papers in secular science journals. Many of his papers deal with design in nature as applied to various manmade machines. He has spoken to senior biologists who privately don’t believe in evolution. There is a vocal minority that demand belief in evolution. There are 6 hallmarks of design: (1) irreducible

complexity—structures that could not have evolved in a stepwise fashion (e.g., knee joint—evolutionists have not even suggested how this could have evolved); (2) complete optimum design—everything must be right (e.g., there are no partially evolved birds); (3) added beauty—beauty for beauty’s sake (bird song, peacock feathers); (4) extreme similarity—common design comes from a common designer (e.g., common design of the eye in many animals); (5) extreme diversity—platypus and Ginkgo tree (both unique); (6) world designed for mankind—every kind of wood for every purpose is available, fruit, the horse. Stuart recommended some of his books: *The Design and Origin of Man*, *He Made the Stars Also*.

The next talk was given by Robert Carter of CMI and was entitled “Why the Spanish Flu Went Extinct.” Much of this talk is discussed in a paper about the H1N1 virus (www.tbiomed.com/content/9/1/42). All medical knowledge is for counteracting the curse. Genetic systems decay over time. In evolution, he who has the most kids wins. Mutations are mostly very slightly deleterious, rarely beneficial. The slightly deleterious mutations are usually undetected by natural selection so they accumulate over time. That genomes are slowly degrading and not improving is due to “genetic entropy.” Carter wanted to find a real-world example of genetic entropy. Carter was able to get the DNA sequence of the H1N1 flu virus that lived in 1918 from the corpse of an infected woman. He wanted to compare the DNA sequences of the virus from then and now to see what mutations had occurred. Natural selection will drive most things to extinction because it can’t eliminate deleterious mutations fast enough. The H1N1 virus has gone extinct at least twice due to genetic entropy.

The remainder of this article can be obtained at the TASC web site at: <http://tasc-creationscience.org/blog-post/cmi-creation-conference-myrtle-beach-sc-july-13-17-2015> ☞

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, October 8, 7:00 pm, Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Room 240
 America has been in moral decline for decades. So called “scientific” explanations for our origins say the universe and life can be explained by natural processes alone. While these explanations have gained popularity, the church has become less relevant to many Americans, especially the young. Dr. Dan Reynolds will lead us in a consideration of a set of polling data that traces the changes in attitudes of Americans towards Christianity and social/political issues over time. We will consider the state and fate of American culture and the church in light of scripture. We will explore what believers can do and hope for in the current situation.