

# We Believe in Creation

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*Documento ASA – Centro de Ciencia y Fe (Facultad SEUT)*

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It should be well known to readers of the *Journal ASA* that the ASA does not take an official position on controversial questions. Creation is not a controversial question. I have no hesitancy in affirming, "We believe in creation," for every ASA member

The Biblical doctrine of creation is one of the richest doctrines revealed to us by God. It reveals to us that the God who loves us is also the God who created us and all things; at once it establishes the relationship between the God of religious faith and the God of physical reality. It is because of creation that we trust in the reality of a physical and moral structure to the universe, which we can explore as scientists and experience as persons. It is because of creation that we know that the universe and everything in it depends moment-by-moment upon the sustaining power and activity of God. It is because of creation that we know that we are not the end-products of meaningless processes in an impersonal universe, but men and women made in the image of a personal God. It is by the formulation of "creation out of nothing" that we affirm that God created the universe freely and separately, and reject the alternatives of dualism and pantheism. To worship God as Creator is to emphasize both His transcendence over the natural order and His imminence in the natural order; it is to recognize that

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His mode of existence as Creator is completely other than our mode of existence as created. To appreciate God as Creator is to recognize that which He created as intrinsically good; the rationale for scientific investigation, the assurance of ultimate personal meaning in life, and the nature of evil as an aberration on a good creation are all intrinsic to such an appreciation. We believe in creation. It is unthinkable for a Christian to do otherwise.

It is because of this foundational character of the Biblical doctrine of creation that it is unfortunate when the word "creation" is used narrowly and restrictively to refer--not to the fact of Creation--but to a possible means in the creative activity, usually to that means known as *fiat* creation. When it is implied that creation and evolution are necessarily mutually exclusive, or when the term "creation" is used as if it were primarily a scientific mechanism for origins, a profound confusion of categories is involved. The implication is given, deliberately or not, that if evolution should be the proper mechanism for the growth and development of living forms, then creation would have to be rejected. To pose such a choice is to do basic damage to the Christian position. It is to play directly into the hands of those evolutionists who argue that their understanding of evolution does away with the theological significance of Creation. If such an evolutionist is wrong to believe that his biological description does away with the need for a theological description, the Christian anti-evolutionist is wrong to believe that his theological description must make any biological description impossible.

The key to much of the evolution controversy lies in the recognition of the necessity and propriety of descriptions of the same phenomena on different levels of reality. Even a complete biological description does not do away with the need for a theological description, any more than a complete theological description does away with the possibility of a compatible biological description. Evolution *can* be considered without denying creation; creation *can* be accepted without excluding evolution.

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Evolution is a scientific question on the biological level; it would be unfortunate indeed if a scientific question were permitted to become the crucial point for Christian faith.

Evolutionary philosophy--shall we say rather evolutionary religion--may well be something quite different. In its anti-Christian form, such philosophical evolutionism may involve an exaltation of man, a denial of the reality of moral guilt in any theological sense, and hence an interpretation of the life and death of Jesus as nothing more than a good example. In this view, continued development and improvement are inevitably assured as man, now become conscious of evolution, completes for himself the process of the ages. Such evolutionism is a faith-system which competes for the religious allegiance of men, and against which the Christian faith is called to stand. But, if it is true that the evolutionist must realize that he has little scientific support for extrapolating biological evolution into a general principle of life, the Christian anti-evolutionist must realize that he has little religious justification upon which to attack a scientific theory dealing with biological mechanisms. How tragic it often is when Christians, seeking to avoid the errors of philosophical evolutionism, promulgate the falsehood that the efficacy of faith in the atonement of Christ effectively depends upon the dogmatic acceptance of *fiat* creation and the dogmatic rejection of any evolutionary processes.

We believe in Creation. We praise the Lord for that faith. But let us avoid either posing creation and evolution as intrinsically antithetical alternatives, the acceptance of one demanding the rejection of the other, or presenting creation as a scientific mechanism alternative to evolution, as though good science must ultimately lead to the verification of *fiat* creation and a falsification of evolution.