

The BioLogos Foundation's *Theology of Celebration II* Workshop

November, 2010

On November 9-11, 2010, a group of pastors, church leaders, scholars, scientists, and informed laypersons met in New York City for the second *Theology of Celebration* BioLogos Workshop. In light of the scientific consensus that has emerged about the origin of the universe and of life's diversity, there was extensive discussion around the following three themes:

- The theological significance of Adam and Eve's historicity
- The nature of divine activity in a world where life has been created through an evolutionary process
- The appropriate response to the emphasis on scientism that has emerged from some in the secular scientific community

After much dialogue, the following statement emerged, which represents a summary of the discussion, as no attempt was made to develop a binding consensus statement.

Summary Statement

Science and Faith

We affirm historic Christianity as articulated in the classic ecumenical creeds. Beyond the original creation, God continues to act in the natural world by sustaining it and by providentially guiding it toward the goal of a restored and consummated creation. In contrast to Deism, Biologos affirms God's direct involvement in human history, including singular acts such as the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, as well as ongoing acts such as answers to prayer and acts of salvation and personal transformation.

We also affirm the value of science, which eloquently describes the glory of God's creation. We stand with a long tradition of Christians for whom faith and science are mutually hospitable, and we see no necessary conflict between the Bible and the findings of science. We reject, however, the unspoken philosophical presuppositions of scientism, the belief that science is the sole source of all knowledge.

In recent years voices have emerged who seek to undermine religious faith as intellectually disreputable, in part because of its alleged dissonance with science. Some go further, characterizing religion as a "mind virus" or a cultural evil. While many of their ideas are not new, these voices are often identified as the New Atheists, and scientism undergirds their thinking.

In contrast to scientism, we deny that the material world constitutes the whole of reality and that science is our only path to truth. For all its fruitfulness, science is not an all-inclusive source of knowledge; scientism fails to recognize its limitations in fully understanding reality, including such matters as beauty, history, love, justice, friendship, and indeed science itself.

We agree that the methods of the natural sciences provide the most reliable guide to understanding the material world, and the current evidence from science indicates that the diversity of life is best explained as a result of an evolutionary process. Thus BioLogos affirms that evolution is a means by which God

provisionally achieves God's purposes.

Accounts of Origins

We affirm without reservation both the authority of the Bible and the integrity of science, accepting each of the "Two Books" (the Word and Works of God) as God's revelations to humankind. Specifically, we affirm the central truth of the biblical accounts of Adam and Eve in revealing the character of God, the character of human beings, and the inherent goodness of the material creation.

We acknowledge the challenge of providing an account of origins that does full justice both to science and to the biblical record. Based on our discussions, we affirm that there are several options that can achieve this synthesis, including some which involve a historical couple, Adam and Eve, and that embrace the compelling conclusions that the earth is more than four billion years old and that all species on this planet are historically related through the process of evolution. We commit ourselves to spreading the word about such harmonious accounts of truth that God has revealed in the Bible and through science.

The following individuals were present and thoughtfully participated in the group discussion that produced this statement:

Denis Alexander, Director of The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion

Kathryn Applegate, Program Director at the BioLogos Foundation

Robert C. Bishop, John and Madeleine McIntyre Professor of Philosophy and History of Science in the Physics Department at Wheaton College

Stephen Ashley Blake, Filmmaker and President of Realm Entertainment

Jim and Carolyn Blankemeyer, Chairman of the MetoKote Corporation and the National Christian Foundation

Barbara Bryant, Trustee of the Trinity Forum

R. Judson Carlberg, President of Gordon College

Ron Choong, Ordained minister and Founder of the Academy for Christian Thought

Francis Collins, Former leader of the Human Genome Project, author of *The Language of God*, and Director of the National Institutes of Health

Michael Cromartie, Vice President at the Ethics and Public Policy Center

Catherine Crouch, Associate Professor of Physics at Swarthmore College

Andy Crouch, Special Assistant to the President at Christianity Today International

Darrel Falk, President of the BioLogos Foundation and Professor of Biology at Point Loma Nazarene University

Leighton Ford, President of Leighton Ford Ministries

Kerry Fulcher, Dean of Arts and Sciences and Acting Provost at Point Loma Nazarene University

Karl Giberson, Vice President of the BioLogos Foundation, Professor of Physics at Eastern Nazarene College, and

author

Charley Gordon, Neurological Surgeon

Os Guinness, Author or editor of more than 25 books and primary drafter of the Williamsburg Charter

Deborah Haarsma, Associate Professor and Chair of Physics & Astronomy at Calvin College

Daniel Harrell, Senior Minister of Colonial Church and author of *Nature's Witness: How Evolution Can Inspire Faith*

Matthew J. Heynen, Project Manager for the Theological Book Network

Joel C. Hunter, Senior Pastor of Northland, A Church Distributed

Ian Hutchinson, Professor of Nuclear Science and Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Randy Isaac, Executive Director of the American Scientific Affiliation

Sidney J. Jansma, Jr and Catherine Jansma, President and CEO of Wolverine Gas and Oil Corporation

Tim Keller, Pastor and Founder of Redeemer Presbyterian Church and author of *The Reason for God*

Paul H. Lange, Professor of Urology at the University of Washington

Ard Louis, Reader in Theoretical Physics at Oxford University

Patrick McDonald, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Seattle Pacific University

Tim O'Connor, Professor and Chair of Philosophy at Indiana University

Thomas Jay Oord, Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Northwest Nazarene University

Jeff Schloss, Professor of Biology and Director of the Center for Faith, Ethics, and the Life Sciences at Westmont College

Randy Scott, Chairman of the BioLogos Foundation

Sanford C. "Sandy" Shugart, President of Valencia Community College

Dean Smith, Senior Pastor of the Highway Community

Mark Sprinkle, Artist and Senior Fellow at the BioLogos Foundation

Tim Stafford, Author and Senior Writer for *Christianity Today*

Dave Ussery, Associate Professor at the Center for Biological Sequence Analysis at the Technical University of Denmark

Luder Whitlock, President of Excelsis and former Executive Director of The Trinity Forum

Philip Yancey, Best-selling author of evangelical Christian literature

Amos Yong, J. Rodman Williams Professor of Theology at Regent University