

Cole Valley Christian Schools Position Paper on Creation and Evolution

Purpose

The diversity of beliefs regarding our origins, and the intensity with which those beliefs are held, cause rifts in our culture and even separate Christians from one another. Cole Valley Christian Schools, because it is a school, must address the contentious topics of creation and evolution forthrightly. However, because we serve a wide variety of churches we are committed to preserving unity among Christians when we address controversial subjects. The School Board is guided by the Romans 14 principle of grace toward those who hold different opinions on debatable matters, allowing latitude in matters where Scripture is not clear while holding firm to teachings that Scripture makes very clear. Recognizing the need for clarity, knowing that committed Christians hold a variety of views regarding the age of the earth and the beginning of life, and heeding Paul's teaching in Romans 14, the CVCS School Board developed this paper to clarify the board's approach to teaching creation and evolution. In this paper, the word "evolution" refers to macro-evolution, the process by which life is assumed to have arisen from non-living material and then diversified into all life forms.

Introduction

Genesis 1 introduces us to the God who created the universe and everything in it. While ancient pagan cultures worshipped the sky, sun, moon, stars, seas, and many other created things, Genesis 1, dismantles that common pagan world view by revealing the true nature of these objects of worship as simply parts of creation spoken into being by the true creator God. Our modern culture, similar to the culture of Paul's day as described in Romans 1, has exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for a "god" of an entirely different nature – in this case the natural forces collectively labeled "evolution." The popularizers of Charles Darwin's theory have exalted impersonal and uncaring forces of evolution as the origin of life and rejected the God described in Genesis who created humanity and who desires a close personal relationship with humankind.

Linked to the question about the origin of life are questions about the age of the universe and the age of the earth. While science and the Bible agree that the universe had a beginning, views regarding the age of the universe and the age of the earth diverge widely, even within the church. Although Christians agree that the universe was created by God, Christians continue to divide into camps regarding the exact nature of the six days of creation recorded in Genesis. Even among scholars who are united by a high view of Scripture as the authoritative word of God and who believe that the text is a true record inspired by God, the text of Genesis 1 is subject to a variety of interpretations. It is worth remembering that differences of opinion regarding the time involved in the days of creation arose within the church early in its history, centuries before the advent of modern science and the writings of Darwin. For example, Augustine in the 5th century proposed that the six days of creation were not to be understood literally¹. Today, continuing the tradition of divergent interpretations, some assert that creation occurred in six consecutive 24-

¹ *The City of God* XI, vi.

hour creation days, some assert that the days represent long eras or are representative days in a long era, some maintain that the record of creation is set in a literary framework not intended to be chronological, and some propose other alternative interpretations.

While the specific interpretation of the time span of creation is debatable, CVCS asserts that God did indeed create the earth and all it contains. The vast diversity of life is not the result of a purposeless natural evolutionary process. All life was purposely created. Human beings are not simply highly evolved animals. Rather, we are made in the image of God – the personal God who purposely created everything for His glory. Because we are created in God’s image, we have worth and purpose, and we have someone to whom we are ultimately accountable.

The School Board of Cole Valley Christian Schools asserts the following.

At Cole Valley Christian Schools, because of our commitment to love:

- We will approach the subject of origins with humility, recognizing that Scripture leaves some questions unanswered, and acknowledging the history of occasionally bitter divisions regarding interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 (Pr. 15:1; 19:11; Matt. 5:5; Eph. 4:1-3; Titus 3:1-2).

Because of our commitment to truth:

- We affirm that the biblical record of creation in Genesis is true in all that it affirms.
 - The Old Testament is filled with references to God’s act of creation. One notable example is in Job, where God describes the events of creation in his response to Job’s challenge (Job 38:4-11).
 - Jesus refers to creation (Mark 13:19).
 - Many passages in the New Testament refer to God’s creative action (e.g., Mark 10:6; Acts 17:24-27; Heb. 1:10).
- We assert that the universe had a beginning, and that God created it (Genesis 1:1; Ps. 33:6, for example).
- We assert that God created the earth and the living things upon it, including human beings.
 - This is the uniform testimony of Scripture from beginning to end: examples include Gen. 1:1-2:25; Ex. 20:11; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 33:6, 9; 136:4-9; Is. 42:5; 43:7; 45:12, 18; Jer. 10:12, 16; John 1:3; Acts 4:24; 14:15; 17:24-25; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11.
- We assert that human beings are made in God’s image and thus distinct from animals (Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1-3; 9:6; James 3:9).
- We assert that people, male and female, have value and dignity because they are made in God’s image (Gen. 1:26-27; Gen. 5:2).
- We assert that Adam and Eve were real people.
 - Jesus refers to the creation of man and woman, quoting Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 in Matt. 19:4-5 and Mark 10:6-8.
 - Jesus believed that Abel was a real person (Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:51).
 - Luke traces Jesus’ genealogy to Adam in Luke 3:38.

- We maintain that the Genesis record includes everything that the author, as prompted by God, considered important for us to know. However, we do not believe that the Genesis record is an exhaustive account of the creation events.
 - God leaves some things as mystery. He purposely does not explain everything in a detailed scientific manner (Deut. 29:29).
 - We believe that God has provided us with all of the information about creation that we need in order to live godly lives (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- We do not believe that the theory of evolution provides a satisfactory explanation for the origin of life.
 - The text of Genesis emphasizes that God specifically created humans (Gen. 1:26-27; Gen. 2:7).
 - Plants were created to reproduce after their own kind (Gen. 1:11-12).
 - Aquatic creatures and birds were created after their own kinds (Gen. 1:21).
 - Land creatures were created after their own kinds (Gen. 1:24-25).
- We do not believe in Theistic Evolution, the view that God guided the process of evolution to produce the desired outcome.
 - God was personally involved in creation, not distant (Ps. 33:6, 9; 139:13; Is. 40:26; 42:5).
 - Humans were not selected or modified from pre-existing hominids, but created by a direct act of God (Gen. 1:26-28; Gen. 2:7). Eve, in particular, was not a pre-existing hominid chosen to be Adam's partner. God had presented to Adam all of the land animals and birds for his review and during that review no suitable helper was found (Gen. 2:20). Had there been a suitable preexisting female hominid, this would have been the opportunity to present her to Adam. Instead, the suitable helper, Eve, was fashioned from Adam himself (Gen. 2:21-23; 1 Cor. 11:8).
- We affirm that God continues to be active in creation, sustaining it (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3).
- We encourage study of the sciences and scientific investigation of God's creation.
 - God created a rational and orderly universe (Gen. 1; Jer. 31:35) in which cause and effect can be studied (Ps. 111:2).
 - The universe points to God as the creator (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20).

Because of our commitment to grace:

- We recognize that committed, theologically conservative, Bible-believing Christians differ regarding the interpretation of the Genesis creation account – some believing that the account points to a young earth and some believing that the account permits an old earth.
- We purposely present a variety of views regarding the age of the earth, and deliberately do not take an official position regarding the earth's age.

Conclusion

- We will intentionally prepare our students for the world after graduation by training them to understand the multiple views of creation consistent with Scripture and by training them to understand the theory of evolution.
 - We will present the theory of evolution, pointing out where the arguments are strong and where they are weak.

- We will teach creation, pointing out where arguments against it are made and teach students biblically appropriate responses to such arguments.
- We will encourage students to appreciate and study general revelation provided by God's creation (Ps. 19:1; Ps. 111:2; Rom. 1:20) and special revelation provided by God's written Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). When apparent contradictions between science and the Bible arise, we encourage students to consider three possibilities:
 - The given scientific explanation is incomplete or in error.
 - Our understanding or interpretation of Scripture is incomplete or in error.
 - Both the scientific explanation and our understanding of Scripture are in error.
- We will prepare and instill confidence in our students so that they can make a viable, honorable, and winsome defense of the Scriptures and the gospel in the midst of the evolution-saturated environment of universities (2 Tim. 2:24-25; 1 Peter 3:15).
- We will encourage students to continue seeking truth throughout the rest of their lives (3 John 1:4).

School Board
 Cole Valley Christian Schools
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Elder Council
 Cole Community Church
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References in order of appearance in the paper (all NASB)

Pr. 15:1: A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

Pr. 19:11: A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.

Matt. 5:5: Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Eph. 4:1-3: Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Titus 3:1-2: Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

Job 38:4-11: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? "On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy? "Or who enclosed the sea with doors When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; When I made a cloud its garment And thick darkness its swaddling band, And I placed boundaries on it And set a bolt and doors, And I said, 'Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop'?"

Mark 13:19: "For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will."

Mark 10:6: "But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. "

Acts 17:24-27: "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; "

Heb. 1:10: And, "YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;"

Gen. 1:1: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Ps. 33:6: By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.

Gen. 1:1-2:25: (too long to include)

Ex. 20:11: For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

Neh. 9:6: Thou alone art the LORD. Thou hast made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. Thou dost give life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before Thee.

Ps. 33:6, 9: By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

Ps. 136:4-9: To Him who alone does great wonders, For His lovingkindness is everlasting; To Him who made the heavens with skill, For His lovingkindness is everlasting; To Him who spread out the earth above the waters, For His lovingkindness is everlasting; To Him who made the great lights, For His lovingkindness is everlasting: The sun to rule by day, For His lovingkindness is everlasting, The moon and stars to rule by night, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Is. 42:5: Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk in it

Is. 43:7: Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made.

Is. 45:12, 18: "It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands, And I ordained all their host." For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, But formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and there is none else."

Jer. 10:12, 16: It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens. The portion of Jacob is not like these; For the Maker of all is He, And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; The LORD of hosts is His name.

John 1:3: All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Acts 4:24: And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is Thou who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them,

Acts 14:15: and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them.

Acts 17:24-25: "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things;

Col. 1:16: For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.

Rev. 4:11: "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created."

Gen. 1:26-27: Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Gen. 5:1-3: This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.

Gen. 9:6: "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man."

James 3:9: With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;

Gen 1: 26-27: Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Gen. 5:2: He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.

Gen. 1:27: And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Gen. 2:24: For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Matt. 19:4-5: And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'?"

Mark 10:6-8: "But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh."

Matt. 23:35: that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Luke 11:51: from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.

Luke 3:38: the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Deut. 29:29: The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

2 Tim. 3:16-17: All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Gen. 1:26-27: Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Gen. 2:7: Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Gen. 1:11-12: Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them"; and it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:21: God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:24-25: Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

Ps. 33:6, 9: By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

Ps. 139:13: For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb.

Is. 40:26: Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power Not one of them is missing.

Is. 42:5: Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk in it,

Gen. 1:26-28: Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Gen. 2:7: Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Gen. 2:20: The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

Gen. 2:21-23: So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib

which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

1 Cor. 11:8: For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man.

Col. 1:17: He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Heb. 1:3: And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Gen. 1: (too long to include)

Jer. 31:35: Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day, And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name:

Ps. 111:2: Great are the works of the LORD; They are studied by all who delight in them.

Ps. 19:1: The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

Rom. 1:20: For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Ps. 19:1: The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

Ps. 111:2: Great are the works of the LORD; They are studied by all who delight in them.

Rom. 1:20: For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

2 Tim. 3:16-17: All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Tim. 2:24-25: And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

1 Peter 3:15: but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

3 John 1:4: I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.