

# **ROGER OAKLAND BOLDLY PROCLAIMS** **THE GOSPEL TO SEEKER FRIENDLY** **CHURCH EMBRACING EVOLUTION**

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*Roger Oakland - over the quarter century that I have been speaking on the topic of biblical creation, I have noticed some changes. Many churches that once boldly proclaimed the Genesis record are now claiming that God used evolution to create. What impact does this have on the gospel?*

Not long ago, I was asked to speak at a "seeker-friendly" church. A couple of weeks before the speaking engagement, a pastor from this church called me and wanted to know exactly the content of my message. When I told him that my topic would be the importance of creation to Christianity, he expressed some concerns. "We will likely have a number of evolutionists in our service, he said. "We don't want to offend any of them." A few days later I received another call from this same pastor. Apparently there had been a skit scheduled for the morning I was to be the guest speaker at his church. He wanted to let me know that the time for the message had been reduced. "Would it be possible to cover what you are going to say in five to ten minutes?" he asked.

The Sunday came and I was at the church ready to speak. A skit was performed by two men who played the role of "birdwatchers" as they presented their case. The objective of the skit was to show that God is creative, but not necessarily the Creator as described in Genesis. "You just can't take the Bible literally," one said. Later he added: "The Bible is a good book when it comes to faith, but it is not reliable about the subject of origins."

My message that followed the skit was short and brief. I presented my view that creation is the basis of the Christian faith. Then I shared some of my personal testimony of how I had been converted from an evolutionist to a creationist, then became a Bible believing Christian. I shared how God had transformed my life and how I had seen the lives of others around the world changed after they had been presented the overwhelming evidence supporting the biblical creation view. As the message continued, I noticed the necks of the people stretched upward indicating they were listening to every word.

Then I presented the gospel. "God is the Creator and man has been separated from the Creator because of sin," I said. I told the congregation that the indoctrination of evolution was Satan's clever plan to deceive people to believe that God didn't create. Finally I mentioned that it is infinitely important we acknowledge the Creator and what He has done. "As well," I said, "the Creator is also our Redeemer, and He wants to have first place in our lives."

The skit was "seeker friendly." My message was not, although it was based on the truth. (By the way, I have never been invited back). It seems to me when we try to bring people to faith by telling them that biblical creation is a myth, we have misrepresented the Bible. Faith comes by

hearing the Word, the Bible states.

I don't have a problem with using drama for the purpose of drawing people to Christ. However, a seeker friendly message that isn't biblically based could actually be responsible for leading people to Hell. That would be seeker unfriendly, wouldn't it? Let's make sure the gospel message remains creation-based.

## **THEISTIC EVOLUTION**

*When it comes to origins, there are three basic views - evolution, creation or God used evolution to create. So what about this view that the biblical creator used the Darwinian process of chance and time to bring all life into existence? Why do so many Christians accept this view? Is it biblically acceptable or is it a compromise?*

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I have given thousands of lectures in universities, schools, churches and conferences around the world on the topic of origins. These lectures usually contrast the differences between the evolution and creation world views. While it is not possible to prove either view scientifically, because we cannot observe what occurred in the distant unobservable past, it is possible to examine the facts we see in the present. In my introduction to these lectures, I always tell the people there are only two basic models for origins - evolution or creation. Then we examine the claims of evolution and the claims of creation demonstrating that evolution is based on assumptions that are false - explosions do not create order, life does not originate from non life spontaneously, nor is there a mechanism to show life has evolved from simple to complex.

Following these meetings it is almost certain to be confronted by people who insist they believe in God but they believe God used millions of years of evolutionary processes to create. They say there is no problem whatsoever, accommodating Darwinism into the Bible. So what about this view? Is it credible? Is it compatible with what the Bible teaches? What about from the Darwinian perspective? Does evolution have a supernatural directing force? Speaking of Darwinism, Charles Darwin was asked during his life time if he thought God could have used evolution to create? His answer was abrupt. Evolution is purely a natural process he said. That was the basis and the reason for his theory. No supernatural directing force was necessary – only matter, time and chance.

For me, I have a personal reason for rejecting "Christian evolution." When I taught Biology as an unbeliever, I was an evolutionist. Evolution was my reason or excuse for explaining away the Creator. My conversion to Christianity was from evolution to creation to Christ. Now as a Christian, I question why other Christians seem so confident that God could have used evolution to create. Why would you use a process that has been used to explain away God, to explain God? It just doesn't make sense.

Further, there is another major problem with trying to accommodate evolution into the Bible. The Darwinian view proposes that life has arisen from lower to higher, from simple to complex, by processes over millions of years of time, as life lived and died while competing. How do you reconcile this with the Genesis record? The Bible states that death in this world became a reality when Adam sinned. In order to believe in theistic evolution, one has to believe there were billions of years of death and survival of the fittest before Adam ever came on the scene.

It should be obvious that evolution and creation are two separate explanations for origins. To combine the two is what is called an oxymoron. It is like saying that I saw a flaming snow flake.