

American Council of Christian Churches
73rd Annual Convention, October 21-23, 2014
Bible Presbyterian Church, Apollo, Pennsylvania
“Resolution on Young Earth Creationism”

In 1925, the trial of a science teacher in Tennessee on the charge of teaching evolution in violation of state law became the flashpoint in the escalating conflict between Bible believers and Bible deniers. The trial attracted two of the nation’s most prominent attorneys, a clear sign that more was at stake than whether or not the teacher should be fined as the law required. For the defense was Clarence Darrow, a brilliant advocate and well-known theological skeptic, who favored the growing secularization of American society. For the State of Tennessee was William Jennings Bryan, former Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson, and three times a loser as the Democratic Party nominee for President of the United States. But Bryan’s credentials that brought him to Dayton, Tennessee for that trial were that he was a firm believer in the Bible and in its literal interpretation, especially as it concerned the first chapters of Genesis, and that he was a most eloquent speaker. The prosecution counted on Bryan’s prominence and ability to persuade the jury to return a guilty verdict. The prosecution was not disappointed.

But the victory of Bryan at the trial, followed only a short time afterward by his death, actually highlighted the growing influence of those who favored the view that the universe was millions, if not billions, of years old and that evolution was to be accepted as fact. Of course, those who believed the Bible and followed Christ never acceded to those views, at least in that period. But the advent of the New Evangelicalism in the late 1940s began to shift the theological ground. To be more accommodating to theological liberals, New Evangelicals not only began to distance themselves from Fundamentalists, but also began to minimize the importance of a literal approach to interpreting the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Evangelicals not only opened the door for greater acceptance of other approaches to the doctrine of creation, but they also began to embrace those approaches themselves.

That insidious approach yielded disturbing fruit in the last decades of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st. The Christian Science Monitor reported that shortly after the debate between Bill Nye and Ken Ham, Pat Robertson offered the opinion that, “There ain’t no way that’s possible... We have skeletons of dinosaurs that go back 65 million years. To say it all dates back to 6,000 years is just nonsense, and I think [it’s] time we come off of that stuff, and say this isn’t possible. Let’s be real; let’s not make a joke of ourselves” (<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2014/0206/Pat-Robertson-rejects-young-earth-creationism.-Nonsense-he-says.-video>). The same article observed that increasing numbers of Evangelicals are embracing Robertson’s views.

For the defenders of young earth creationism the chief issue is not a scientific one but a theological and biblical one. Specifically, the question swings on the hinges of what Jesus Christ meant when he referred to the fact that God made people at the beginning male and female (Matt 19:3-5). When Christ asked about their reading the account, He was stamping the accounts in Genesis with his own authority. Thus, to deviate from the language of the first chapters of Genesis is to depart from the authority of Christ. Did God make them at the beginning or not? Did He make the entire creation in six literal days, as proclaimed in Exodus 20:11, or not?

There is no way forward for those who claim to defend the fundamentals of the faith than to adhere unwaveringly to the language of Holy Scripture. To compromise on that which the infallible Book proclaims is to subvert the whole basis of Christian faith. To accept the argument that since some of the church fathers appeared to entertain a philosophical or figurative approach to interpreting the story of creation, evangelicals should abandon the clear statements of the Lord Jesus Christ is to demonstrate that we have betrayed the message of the Bible and have targeted the gospel for destruction.

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches, at its annual convention, October 21-23, 2014, at the Bible Presbyterian Church of Apollo, PA, resolves to re-emphasize its stand for the Scriptures by defending the truth that God created the universe exactly as the Scriptures say He did. We follow the instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anyone who differs from Christ on any issue on which He spoke cannot claim to be a faithful disciple. We urge every Christian to maintain the doctrine of the creation of all things by the direct act of God. Only in that way can we continue to emphasize the gracious message of Christ's redemption of sinners from the curse of the law through the sacrifice of His own blood on the cross.



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P.O. Box 628 – Orwell, OH 44076
www.accc4truth.org