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Dear

It is very unusual for me to consider it proper or necessary to compose a letter for the specific purpose of pointing out the dangers of a particular document which a creationist leader has written and distributed. However, the June 1984 Impact, No. 132, by Henry M. Morris has been sent out, calling upon all evangelicals either to accept the young-earth creation hypothesis or to adopt a theistic evolution position. On page iii Dr. Morris states, "Furthermore, if one must make a choice between full-fledged theistic evolutionism and a compromising 'progressive creationism' with its 'day age' theory of Genesis, one would have to judge the latter worse than the former, theologically speaking.... Theistic evolution at least postulates a God able to plan and energize the total 'creation' process right at the start...." (See the enclosed copy of the article for the full text.)

So Morris is actually recommending theistic evolutionism as the next-best view for those evangelicals who can not tolerate the young-earth creationists' outright rejection of the geological evidences for long periods of time. Notice in this that he specifies "fullfledged theistic evolutionism." This is the liberal form of theistic evolution, which rejects the idea that there ever was a single human pair from which the human race arose, and consequently rejects the teaching given through Moses, Christ, and Paul on the fall of man. (Many conservative evangelicals try to hold to a form of theistic evolution which recognizes the unity of the human race and the fall of Adam and Eve. Such a view still rejects the full inspiration of the creation teaching of the Bible, but it is much better than fullfledged theistic evolutionism.) Most of us who accept the full inspiration of the entire Bible are always ready to warn people against accepting either of these forms of theistic evolution, and to suggest that the Christian can find full satisfaction in accepting one or another of the forms of fiat creation teaching which preserves the historicity and divine authorship of the first three chapters of Genesis, and considers the Genesis account of creation to be in agreement with what is clearly visible in the rock strata of the earth. But Morris rejects all these conservative forms of creation doctrine, saying that they are a "dead-end path of compromise" (p. ii). In saying this he and his colleagues ignore the fact that most of the long array of prominent theologians and Bible teachers who strongly and openly opposed Darwinian evolution, all the way up to the middle of this century, believed in an old earth and accepted either a "gap view" or some form of "day-age" view. An investigation of the lives and work of these men, up to the time of the death of each of them, shows that practically all remained true to the full inspiration of the Scriptures, and that their belief in creation was neither stagnant nor a compromise with evolution.

Immediately after his condemnation of all of these conservative Bible teachers, Morris says, "...the concept of a personal, omnipotent, omniscient, loving God is fatally flawed by the old-earth dogma. The very reason for postulating an ancient cosmos is to escape from God...." (p. ii). We all recognize that the term "fatally flawed" means that the idea being considered is shown to be totally erroneous. So he is saying that if the earth is old, then God is not personal, not omnipotent, not omniscient, and not loving. So Morris is obviously making an all-out attempt to destroy all forms of belief in special creation except his own. It is indeed difficult to understand why he should wish to do this, since he and his colleagues surely know that there is already too much of a trend away from special creation and toward theistic evolution among evangelicals. But the fact that the Impact No. 81 (March 1980) and Morris' forthcoming book A History of Modern Creationism seem to represent

this same destructive purpose indicates that they are in fact trying to obliterate all other forms of creation doctrine. What should be our reaction to this? Do we really want to see all evangelicals in either the young-earth or the theistic evolution camp? If not, what are we willing to do about it?

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries there was a great triumph for the cause of evangelical Christianity when conservative Bible scholars had enough foresight and Christian logic to realize that it would not be a good testimony for Christians to reject the plainly observable facts of the rock strata of the earth and to still claim to be consistent and honest scholars. I am not accusing Morris and his colleagues of any direct dishonesty. That is an issue between each of them and the One righteous God of all the earth. But we do know that they have almost fanatically restricted themselves to only one of the three or four conservative methods of interpreting the first chapter of Genesis, all of which uphold the full inspiration and historicity of that chapter. We also know that Morris and at least most of his colleagues have written many works which show them to be extremely uninformed concerning those various non-radiometric aspects of geology which clearly demonstrate that long periods of time were required for the depositing of most of the earth's sedimentary strata. On page iv of this Impact No. 132 Morris shows that he is completely out of touch with current geologic science, by making a totally erroneous statement concerning geologists and catastrophism (in the next-to-the-last paragraph).

In that paragraph he endorses and emphasizes the false rumor, which has been passed around recently among extreme creationists, that there is a trend among professional geologists to accept the idea that all of "the earth's various geologic features were each formed rapidly." (p. iv) It is true that Morris' statement on this does not use the word "all," but the wording of it very strongly implies "all." Practically every reader will understand him to be saying that there is a trend in the geology profession to believe that most or all geologic formations, including ancient buried coral reefs, evaporite deposits, and the vast limestone and shale layers of the earth, were formed catastrophically. But those of us who regularly read professional geologic journals or research reports, and attend professional geology meetings, know that no such trend exists. Geologists regularly recognize and report on whatever catastrophic features they find in the earth's sedimentary strata, such as under-water sediment slides and debris flows which have rapidly buried many beds of marine organisms (to be fossilized), and the various deposits built up by volcanoes. But for every single layer of this type of deposit in the earth's sedimentary cover, they find and describe at least 10 layers which show all the characteristics of being the result of slow marine sedimentation and/or the normal growth of lime-secreting organisms growing in-place. So, here again, as so many times in the past, Morris' writings give a completely wrong impression of what exists in the earth's sedimentary layers. Thus, evangelicals are faced with the double problem of the circulation of large amounts of wrong information regarding earth science, and the destructive efforts to eliminate all forms of special creation doctrine except the young-earth one.

May I ask that you, as a friend of consistent truth, pray "for the peace of" evangelicals, and do all that you can to help our Christian brethren to avoid the extremes which the recent creationist movement has reached? If we do not, then Bible-believing Christians are facing their worst disgrace of this century--a disgrace in which the unbelieving world is already laughing at us for our assertions that the Bible contradicts some of the most thoroughly demonstrated facts of honest scientific research. This seems to have set the stage for heartbreaking failures for those who have hoped for a successful conflict with secular humanist philosophy in our nation.

Yours in Christ's service,

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