

XIX — HUMAN ORIGINS & GOD’S POWER

The Missionary Church is passionately committed to the biblical teaching that God is the Creator of all things (John 1:3).¹ Purely naturalistic views that deny God’s role in creation stand outside the doctrinal fence posts of our denominational family. While individual pastors and churches may hold varying understandings of the specific timeline and processes God employed to accomplish the work described in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, we together agree that creation was an act of God, planned and executed by God alone, out of nothing, without any pre-existing material. All of nature was created by him and has no self-organizing capacity apart from him. As Genesis 1:1 states, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

Specifically, the Missionary Church affirms the existence of one historical Adam and one historical Eve, directly and uniquely created by God. This conviction flows not only from the text of Genesis 1-2 itself, but from our commitment to the integrity of the whole fabric of biblical truth. The biblical account of humanity’s fall (Gen 3), which resulted in our inherited sinful nature, rests upon the existence of a singular historical Adam, as does Paul’s explanation of the “first Adam-second Adam” substitutionary work of Jesus in accomplishing our redemption (Rom 5:12-19). The historicity of the rest of Genesis chapters 1-11—Cain and Abel, Noah, the Flood, the tower of Babel, and all the biblical implications that flow from those accounts—rests upon the historicity of Adam and Eve as described in Genesis 1-2. The existence of a uniquely created Adam and Eve provides integral support to the biblical claim that humanity is uniquely made in God’s image, as distinguished from all other creatures. Further, the genealogy of Jesus recorded in Luke 3 traces Jesus’ lineage through a series of historical individuals beginning with Adam. In short, removing the thread of a uniquely and directly created Adam and Eve causes the whole tapestry of biblical revelation to unravel.

We understand that a primary source of the human origin controversy among Christians is the perceived conflict between science and the biblical account. We assert that there is no ultimate conflict between scientific knowledge and biblical truth, because “all truth is God’s truth.” Science can enable us to see with greater clarity God’s glory in creation. For this reason, scripture encourages us to examine the created order for evidence of God’s invisible attributes (Rom 1:20), as well as his involvement in and with his creation. Apparent conflicts between biblical truth and scientific observation are legitimately worthy of study with a heart for understanding. We also understand that scientific inquiry is limited. For example, scientific methodology cannot prove or disprove the biblical human origins account. The Bible provides that account in the words of the “God who was there” and asks us to accept by faith that his power is sufficient to accomplish whatever his Word declares.

As Christians, we know that many historical events described in the Bible cannot be scientifically observed or explained. Science—anthropology, geology, archeology, etcetera—may corroborate aspects of the biblical record, but we accept by faith many biblical assertions that stand outside the scope of scientific inquiry. For example, we believe that Jesus rose from the dead, even though this historical event cannot be scientifically verified today.

We also believe that we who are in Christ will rise from the dead, complete with resurrected bodies, and that all persons will live forever, either with God or apart from his presence. We believe God performs miracles. These and many other biblical truths cannot be scientifically explained. Therefore, science is a valuable and biblically encouraged tool for investigating reality, but it is not our ultimate source of truth. We are first and foremost people of faith: in God, in his Word, and in his power to do whatever he says he did, is doing, and will do.

— Adopted by the 2019 General Conference

¹ As demonstrated by the multiple references to God as Creator in the “Articles of Faith” segment of our Constitution.