

Removing Gospel Barriers

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Each year, I and several other popular international writers and speakers fly to Glen Rose, Texas, to give apologetics presentations at the Creation Evidence Museum. The sermons and lectures deal with the evidence for the Bible and other issues related to apologetics. Since to fly us out to Texas entails considerable expense and time, I asked my sponsors if visits to other churches while there would help make the trip more worthwhile. Although a number of internationally known speakers visit Glen Rose, the answer I received is that none of the local churches are interested in supporting us. The common reason is the question of if the evidence for the Genesis claim that God created life as taught in Genesis, Chapters One and Two, is too controversial. A few church members may not accept Genesis and, instead, believe that life evolved by the natural selection of mutations, a process called evolution. Since a few church members may object, the pastors state they would rather just avoid the topic.

Another experience along the same line is exemplified by my having presented apologetics sermons at Zion Lutheran Church in a Pittsburgh suburb several times. The Zion pastor decided he would visit other Lutheran churches to have them announce the topic of my apologetic sermons to their congregations. The pastor then visited a dozen nearby Lutheran churches, and none of them would even announce the presentation. They also refused to mention it in their church bulletin. Again, the same reason was given: the first chapter of Genesis, and apologetics in general, is too controversial.

This reminded me of a presentation given by Donn S. Chapman, Senior Pastor of Cornerstone Ministries at the 2013 International Conference on Creationism. The introduction to Pastor Chapman's brief comments, given by Pastor Reid Moon, mentioned that Chapman was coming forward because other pastors were very skittish about the creation issue. Pastor Chapman, though, is not skittish when it comes to this subject. He pastors a church of about 1500 members. Pastor Chapman then stated he was "humbled to be speaking to this august group of scientists." He continued on with the following address:

"There are, though, several things that I want to say. We use the evidence of science to validate the truth of creation. And I believe in the truth of creation because I believe the Bible is the Word of God. And I believe if you read the Bible in the way that it's written, you have to believe that God made the creation in six days as Genesis teaches. If we don't understand the significance of the first 11 chapters of Genesis, we will never raise up young people with a Christian worldview. We need to realize that we are in a war, and that you can't have a Christian perspective, a Christian way of thinking, without understanding both Creation and the Fall. And for this reason it is essential that we talk about this if we're going to build mature Christians. And, consequently, the importance of this topic is very much on my heart.

I'm very passionate about this topic. I understand how the new generation is thinking, but to compromise the truth is not an option. And it is not something that we can compromise. There are two subjects about which I'm always told that we must downplay if we want to grow as a church. One of them is creation, and the other is abortion. And, I'm sorry, those aren't options for me to dilute. If I would say one thing to pastors it is, 'are the people that you will attract and keep through compromise wise?' The people that you will attract and keep by standing on the truth, and speaking the truth with love, will change the world. And that's what every pastor needs to understand. And then having understood that, stand for the truth and God will bless you. Thank you so much for letting me address you tonight."

One church that is not skittish about the issue of creation is the Quentin Road Baptist Church (Lake Zurich, Illinois, near Chicago) where I have addressed the

congregation of over 800 several times on this topic. I received consistently very favorable feedback and am unaware of any concerns except one. My PowerPoint included a misspelling that was corrected by the spell checker. Unfortunately, the word that the spell checker added turned out to be inappropriate for a church audience. Several mentioned that this mistake, although very embarrassing, was not a problem, as spell checkers sometimes replace misspelled words by a correctly spelled, but wrong, word. The content of my power point was not a problem.

From my experience covering this topic at 400-plus churches, I conclude pastors misjudge the concerns on this topic. Quentin Road Baptist, which Dr. James and Linda Scudder founded in 1972, God has greatly blessed. The fact that it has grown from a small store front to its present mega church size is one example of where teaching Genesis has not hurt growth, but has, instead, seen God richly bless the church. The same is true of Cornerstone Ministries.

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