

Texas Baptist Forum

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Right next door

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“I’m looking forward to that big reunion up there. God bless you all.”

Billy Graham

The final words of his 418th crusade—in New Orleans— “probably the last evangelistic sermon I’ll ever preach”
(RNS)

“Suggesting a married Jesus is one thing, but questioning the Resurrection undermines the very heart of Christian belief. ... The Resurrection is perhaps the sole controversial Christian topic about which I would not desire to write.”

Dan Brown

Author of The Da Vinci Code, who is being sued for allegedly copying from Holy Blood, Holy Grail, which theorized that Christ did not die on the cross (The Washington Post / RNS)

“If Christians are being persecuted in this country, in my opinion, it's because they've asked for it. We will experience much less persecution, if it exists, when we return to preaching the love of God—that is all that has ever won people to the love of Christ.”

David Currie

Executive director of Texas Baptists Committed (ABP)

“Everybody seems to be imprisoned in their own sectarian or political affiliations. They don't seem to be able to rise above these things.”

Adnan Pachachi

Former Iraqi foreign minister and current Parliament member (New York Times)

It's difficult for one outside the situation to resolve the question whether Baylor should "begin a journey toward Rome" (Feb. 20). What I would offer, however, is a rich resource for the wider discussion of the relation of faith and learning that lies ready to hand, which also seems to be totally ignored in the conversation—namely, the numerous Baptist liberal arts universities where faith and learning are thriving and who do not seem to be in mortal danger of an inevitable secular drift unless we move toward Rome.

Such Baptist General Convention of Texas-affiliated schools are Dallas Baptist University, East Texas Baptist University, Hardin-Simmons University, Houston Baptist University, Howard Payne University, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor and Wayland Baptist University. They are not in danger of becoming, "without exception," secular universities. Faith and learning in fact seem to be flourishing in these environments, which do not fit well either alternative model mentioned in the Baylor debate.

Certainly, a difference exists between these universities and Baylor. These are smaller liberal arts universities who focus on teaching as opposed to a much larger research institution. Perhaps it is a matter of scale, where the smaller can more easily accomplish the goal of relating faith and learning than the larger.

Baylor has unique challenges. What I suggest is that, while looking to Rome, with all of her strengths and weaknesses, a valuable resource a little closer to home is not overlooked.

Dan Stiver

Abilene

'Days' of creation

David Jones asks, “Why did God spell out very clearly in Genesis 1 that the earth was created in six literal days?” (Feb. 20) Since Genesis was written in Hebrew, it actually says creation took six periods of time identified in Hebrew by the word yom.

Although yom is most commonly translated into English as “day,” it can (and often does) mean a time either longer or shorter than the 24-hour day Jones insists it means in Genesis.

Herschel Hobbs, one of the most respected Baptist theologians and Bible scholars of the past century, wrote: “The fact is that the Bible does not say dogmatically how long the creative period lasted. The Hebrew word for ‘day’ (yom), like the English word, may mean any number of things—24 hours, a generation, an era, or an indefinite period of time. Since the Holy Spirit inspired the writing of Genesis 1, it must be concluded that he did not spell out this detail. Had he said, ‘a 24-hour day’ or ‘indefinite period of time,’ that would settle it. But since he did not do so, the time element is not a vital point in faith.”

Jones may believe the universe was created in 144 hours, while his Christian brother may believe the universe is billions of years old. The Bible can support either position.

Bill Kincaid

Sanger

What matters

The letter from Wilma Brown was cute (Feb. 20), but I am curious about the teacher who told her she came from a monkey!

Did she ask her what monkey type she came from? There are many, you

know—even a few baboons involved. Some people just can't stand the thought of not knowing something for sure and certain. Some folks can't stand the idea of how old the earth is and just how man came to be!

It's a simple solution! It's called "faith," and I didn't dream it up. The Bible tells me so. God knows, and that's what matters to me and all folks who claim Jesus as the Savior of the world.

Dorothy Vestal Taylor

Lockhart

What matters

I agree with Tim Overton (February 13) on intelligent design but disagree that physical death entered the world with the sin of Adam. Look at Genesis 2:17—(KJ) "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"; (NIV) "for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die"; (Holman) "for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die"; (Contemporary English Version) "If you eat any fruit from that tree, you will die before the day is over."

A small rectangular logo with a black border. Inside, the words "ONLINE" and "ONLY" are stacked vertically in a yellow, sans-serif font.

Adam died that day a spiritual death, separated from God, hiding from God. Jesus paid the penalty of that curse upon the cross and died a spiritual death for us, even going to hell for fulfillment of that death. If Adam's punishment included a physical death and Jesus took that punishment upon the cross, then Christians would never die.

If man was meant to live forever, the Tree of Life had no meaning.

Rex Ray

Bonham

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