

10 April 2010

Dear Colleagues:

Holy week and the Monday through Wednesday of this last week have been a uniquely hectic experience in my 79 years, to say the least. So hectic, I did not even follow the New York Yankees in the New York Times, my team for more than 70 years! I knew the issue of Genesis 1-3 and evolution was emotionally charged, but not this charged. Worse yet, I unwittingly involved the Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) community, especially Dr. Robert (Ric) C. Cannada, Jr., in the brouhaha. I sincerely apologize to you and especially to Ric for not handling the matter more discretely.

Ric's acceptance of my resignation has only added to the emotional turmoil; I have received letters from many quarters condemning RTS for his action. In fact, I was asked to be interviewed about my resignation on ABC News with Diane Sawyer! Of course, I refused because I am certain it would have been spun to reflect negatively on RTS and the church.

I am writing to assure you that I find no fault with the RTS administration; in fact, I think they did the right thing. Let me explain.

As noted, I did not have a chance to vet the video. How would I have edited it?

1. I would have entitled it "why the church *should* accept *creation* by the process of evolution," not "why the church *must* accept evolution." Also I would have emphasized in writing that the introductory "If" is a big "if," because I am not a scientist. Having familiarized myself with reconciliations of religion and science by: Institute of Creation Research (Henry Morris, young earth, no evolution), Reason to Believe (Hugh Ross, old earth, no evolution), Intelligent Design (Philip Johnson, no view on age of earth, but no evolution), BioLogos (intelligent design [lower case] and evolution) and Framework hypothesis (non-committal to any of these views), I consider that of BioLogos the best.
2. I would have deleted my position as a professor at RTS. This was the real problem. I was speaking as an individual, not as a representative of RTS. It may well be that I am the only one on the faculty holding the view of creation by the process of evolution as understood by mainline science, apart from its normal atheistic philosophy. As it stands, I dragged the whole community in the misunderstandings.
3. I would have clarified in writing that by evolution I mean theistic evolution, not naturalistic evolution. And I would have defined theistic evolution as I do in my *Old Testament Theology*
4. I would have called attention to literature such as Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning*, and Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God* that present the case for evolution. (I read Blocher, a brilliant French Reformed Baptist theologian 25 years ago.)
5. I would have also called attention to my *An Old Testament Theology* and W.R.L. Moberly, *The Theology of Genesis*, explaining why I think Genesis can accommodate creation by the process of evolution.

6. I would have called attention to older classic dogmatic theologies such as Shedd and Strong who also held to theistic evolution. I am told that B.B. Warfield held this view but I have been unable thus far to document that.

7. I would have suggested to Ric that he call attention to others in the PCA who also held this view.

All “would haves” due to the poor way in which the video was handled by BioLogos and me.

Regarding the future I hope and pray:

1. This fiasco will not hinder RTS from being open to theistic evolution as I have defined it.
2. I will not be identified by the idiosyncrasy of being “a theistic evolutionist,” like a “cripple,” “a mute,” etc. This topic is neither my field of expertise nor my hobby-horse, I want to get off it as quickly as I can.
3. RTS’ reputation will not be tarnished. I will do all I can to that end, such as writing this letter.
4. Our love for one another will increase more and more.

Our community is based on the rock-solid foundation that our Triune God’s sovereignty over all things is informed by sublimities that surpass our imagination and our ability to praise them.

Tuesday evening I received the call from the dean of another seminary to teach there. He, the executives of the seminary and I are praying about this with thanksgiving.

Your brother in Christ,

Bruce Waltke

“Preach the gospel. If necessary, use words.” Attributed to Francis Assisi