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## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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# The Geoscience Research Institute

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Ariel A. Roth

One of the greatest intellectual battles of our time is the conflict between science and the Bible. Evolutionary interpretations of beginnings over eons of time are in sharp contrast to the biblical account, which presents God as Creator of our world in six days. Many wonder how to reconcile the two. Science is respected, and so is the Bible, which has withstood the onslaught of secularism for more than two centuries.

In 1957 the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists recognized this conflict and established the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI). Starting initially with two individuals, it has now expanded to nine full-time employees working in this intriguing, exciting, and often-controversial area. The Seventh-day Adventist Church should be commended for its willingness to invest in such research pursuits, for it reflects confidence in both good scholarship and in the validity of the truths on which the church has been established.

The basic function of the Geoscience Research Institute is to research and provide information about origins. In this investigation, GRI approaches the important questions about beginnings from a broader basis than is traditional for this area of inquiry. Scientific facts and interpretations are carefully studied, but due recognition is given to information from, and the authority of, the Bible. The institute serves a unique function in counterbalancing secular views of origins such as evolution.

The present research personnel of

the institute, with their area of specialization in parentheses, includes: Ariel A. Roth, Ph.D., director (coral-reef growth); Kathy Ching, M.A. (historical interpretations, editor); Ben Clausen, Ph.D. (nuclear physics); Jim Gibson, Ph.D. (biogeography); Elaine Kennedy, Ph.D. (geology); Jacques Sauvagnat, M.S., director, GRI European Branch Office (paleontology); Professor Carlos Steger, director, GRI South American Branch Office (paleontology); and Clyde Webster, Ph.D. (geochemistry).

The research conducted by GRI is varied but centers on the conflict between science and the Bible. Projects include: analysis of basic nuclear phenomena and their relation to radiometric dating; study of trace-element analysis in volcanic deposits as a clue to their deposition rate; biogeographical factors as related to the distribution of animals after the Genesis flood; the effects of secularization on church growth and vitality; rate of formation of sedimentary layers in the Grand Canyon region; and factors affecting the rate of coral-reef growth. The institute also supports other researchers in their investigation of questions related to origins.

During the past 18 years, 85 grants have been provided to qualified investigators, including some graduate students.

From 1968 to 1980, GRI was located at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. In 1980 it moved to Loma Linda University in California, which has strong scientific programs. The institute has remained affiliated with both institutions and several institute members hold secondary appointments with them. GRI also operates two branch offices, one at the Salève Adventist Institute in France, and the other at River Plate Adventist University in Argentina.

Present facilities at GRI's headquarters include offices, laboratories, and a seminar room. The institute maintains its own library of some 18,000 volumes and subscribes to more than 200 journals. The library collection focuses on topics of special concern in the controversy between science and the Bible, such as evolution and geology.

In addition to research, the members of GRI spend about half of their time in educational and communication activities. They conduct seminars and teach courses in institutions

of higher learning, and also give lectures on creation and science around the world. One of the more interesting educational activities is the conducting of field conferences, where groups of a few dozen spend one to three weeks in study and travel to areas of geological significance, discussing the issues at the location of the disputed evi-



Students examining fossil evidence.

dence. The institute has conducted numerous field conferences in North America as well as some in Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

The institute also publishes three periodicals that are presently on a biannual schedule. *Origins* is a technical journal providing articles and literature reviews at the collegiate and graduate-school level. News about GRI activities is provided in *Geoscience Reports*—which addresses the general public and the elementary and secondary-school levels. *Ciencia de los Orígenes* is a Spanish publication edited by David Rhys, Ph.D., with both general and technical information. Readers who wish sample copies and subscription information should write to the Geoscience Research Institute; Loma Linda University; Loma Linda, CA 92350; U.S.A. Telephone: (714) 824-4548; Fax: (714) 824-4577. Other publications such as reprints from technical journals, books, and papers on selected topics are also available from the institute. Some audio-visual materials have also been produced. Information can be obtained by writing to the above address.

The work of GRI is particularly significant to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Most Christian denominations have yielded to the secular influence of evolution by accommodating with views which suggest that life developed with the aid of God over millions of years. Such views conflict with the Bible and are especially challenging to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, since the Sabbath

—one of the church's most distinctive doctrines—is based primarily on a literal six-day Creation. Once the geologic layers of the Earth are interpreted as needing long ages for formation, this excludes the possibility of an all-inclusive, six-day Creation week as given in Genesis and the Ten Commandments. This is because unique forms of organisms are introduced at different assumed "ages" and could no longer have been created within six days.

Denominations that have adopted views asserting that life developed gradually over millions of years usually hold that the first part of Genesis is allegorical. Such views not only undermine the biblical account of beginnings, but are deprecating to the Bible as a whole, because the leading Bible personalities (e.g., the apostles Paul and Peter, Christ and God) either directly or by implication refer to Genesis 1-11 as factual. The testimony of these authorities authenticates the truthfulness of the biblical account of beginnings.

The work of GRI is becoming particularly significant as the conflict between evolution and the Bible comes more to the forefront. Research at the institute has produced a significant body of scientific evidence that corroborates the biblical account of beginnings. Not all the problems that scientific interpretations pose to the Bible have been solved, but evidence supporting intelligent design for life and of a worldwide flood as described in Genesis have become very impressive.

## Is Chastity . . . ?

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Those who advise single persons to wait until marriage to express themselves in total intimacy offer them the freedom to enter into the celebration of marriage. As in the case of most important celebrations, this one is better when all the details are carefully planned. In addition, celibacy should be considered as an option. There are happy and fulfilled Christians who have chosen to remain single.

This is what maturity is all about—the ability to take in information, weigh options, evaluate and execute decisions. It does not always come with age, but more years usually make it easier.

A suggestion: From now on, instead of thinking of your pre-marriage life as simply marking time until your wedding day, visualize yourself as growing, developing, and enriching all the aspects of your personhood. Then you will be gloriously ready for whatever God is planning for your future.

*Alberta Mazat is a specialist in family life who has had an active career in counseling, lecturing, and teaching at Loma Linda University. She is also the author of many articles and of the recently published book Questions You've Asked About Sexuality (Pacific Press, 1991).*

## Pontius' Puddle

