

Connie W. Adams, Shane Scott, Tim Haile, Miracles, *Truth Magazine* and the CD

By Ferrell Jenkins

Connie W. Adams and I worked together with the Brown Street church in 1967-68. It was a busy, profitable and enjoyable work. He has visited in our home many times since we moved to Florida in December, 1968. It was with disappointment that I read his article on “The Days of Creation” in *Truth Magazine* (July 6, 2000). The article was mostly about Florida College and Shane Scott, a member of the Biblical Studies faculty at Florida College.

A New Criticism

Connie's article was sent to Colly Caldwell by Mike Willis, editor of *Truth Magazine*, in early June. I first saw it on June 9. Both Caldwell and Scott prepared replies to the article within days and had hoped they would be run in the same issue of the paper. But they were not. After waiting until July 24, Caldwell and Scott have agreed for me to post their replies at <http://bibleworld.com>. I trust you will read that material.

This article is about some inconsistencies, even hypocritical conduct I have observed recently. Those who prepared the Open Letter introduced a new criticism of which I was not aware when I gave my speech at the Florida College lectures, Feb. 8, 2000. My speech is available at <http://bibleworld.com>. Had I been aware that this was an issue of importance I would have addressed it at that time.

Tim Haile, who is unknown to me, tells the readers of *Gospel Anchor* (electronic magazine) why he signed the Open Letter. Apparently some coeditors of some gospel papers (*he does not call names*) has called the letter a “Creed.” Tim seems very sensitive about this matter. He says something that is crucial to a proper understanding of the spirit back of the Open Letter.

I find it especially interesting that some of those who are making this charge are coeditors of gospel papers. As such, their names are attached as cosigners of each issue they send out. The presence of their name indicates their approval of the materials published in their paper, unless otherwise stated. These editors sign in agreement with each other. Do multiple signatures attached to published articles make that gospel paper a “creed?” This is all that was done with the open letter. Let's be consistent, brethren. It is “inexcusable” to practice the very thing that you condemn in others (Rom. 2:1). [Haile, Tim.. “Why I Signed the Open Letter.” *Gospel Anchor* July 2000. <<http://www.gospelanchor.com>>.]

Observe carefully: “The presence of their name indicates their approval of the materials published in their paper, unless otherwise stated.”

Very interesting. If Hill Roberts taught evolution at Florida College in Feb., 1999, I said I disagreed with it in my speech (Feb., 2000). That should clear me. I had no idea that anyone would ever think I had ever entertained any idea of the truthfulness of the theory of evolution of either the *animate* or the *inanimate* universe.

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There, I said it again. I believe any such view is erroneous (=false) no matter who advocates it. Further, I am not aware of any teacher at Florida College who is a theistic evolutionist.

What brother Haile tells us is that all SIXTY ONE (later SIXTY SEVEN; maybe more) of these men had to agree to the full content of the letter unless otherwise stated. He said,

The presence of their name indicates their approval of the materials published in their paper, unless otherwise stated.

I suppose this is why it was important for me to denounce a CD that is said to have contained material which advocated the theory of evolution. Let's buy into this line of reasoning for a while and see where it leads.

What I Found in *Truth Magazine*

In the same issue of *Truth Magazine* with brother Adam's article there is an advertisement for the "James Burton Coffman Bible Study Library (New Testament)." This is a CD-Rom which contains the entire text of the Coffman Commentaries on the New Testament. It is said to be "a bargain at \$39.95" (page 409). This is not the first time this advertisement has appeared in the magazine (see June 15, 2000 issue).

According to Haile, this means that Connie W. Adams, J. Wiley Adams, Bill Cavender, Larry Hafley, Ron Halbrook, Daniel H. King, Donnie V. Rader, Tom Roberts, Bobby Witherington, Harry Osborne (all of whom signed the Open Letter with Haile) agree with everything in the magazine. Let's see what is on this CD by Coffman.

In *Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, brother Coffman commented on Paul's phrase, "Not under bondage" (1 Cor. 7:15) in some detail. Here is a summary of his comments:

The view that desertion of a Christian partner by an unbeliever is also presumptive proof of adultery is actually irrelevant to the meaning of this passage. The exception granted by the apostle Paul is grounded upon the fact, not of adultery, but of desertion by an unbelieving partner. The authority of this lies in the plenary authority of the blessed apostle, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, making this therefore to be an additional exception given by Christ himself through the apostle Paul. Any other view of the apostolical writings is absolutely untenable. It is our view that God, through the Holy Spirit, is the author of all the NT. Furthermore, we do not believe that any man or any group of men is endowed with authority to set aside or countermand any declaration in the sacred text upon the basis of their interpretations of related passages. What Paul said, stands. Let men keep their hands off of it! Also, there is no conflict between Paul's word here and Matthew 19:9. There is a covenant relationship there which is not in this situation. Paul and Jesus were speaking of two utterly different situations. (117-18)

Are All the Miracles of the Bible Instantaneous?

In the Open Letter we are given the benefit of the study of the 61 men regarding miracles. They introduce the miracle recorded in Mark 2 and Matthew 9. From this account of *instantaneous* action they draw the conclusion that such is true of all miracles. They appeal to what "faithful brethren" have done in the past (yet several of them have said they care not what Restoration leaders and others have said about these issues):

Faithful brethren in discussions with Pentecostals and charismatics generally, have

pointed out two obvious characteristics of miracles from this and other cases: (a) there was *instantaneous action* to accomplish fully the intended result, and (b) the *action was not explainable by natural law*. (1)

Brethren, if that reply is proper with regard to the miracle of Mark 2, the same principles must apply with respect to every miracle. Surely that includes the “grand daddy” of all miracles, the **Creation** itself. All other miracles pale in comparison!. (1)

The creation of the *inanimate* universe was instantaneous (Gen. 1:1), but according to many of the men who signed the Open Letter there may have been much time between that creation and God's forming or fashioning the earth which He did in six days. Some of them are willing to wait a *long time* before God continued His work. I speak of the Gap Theory which is assumed by Frost, Needham, Martin and others who signed the letter. The Gap Theory can be found in the blank space between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2. It *may* be true, and many brethren have held the view, but I am not willing to be *dogmatic* about something for which I have *no evidence*. I have understood that these views were taken in an effort to harmonize the Bible with the apparent long age of geology without compromising with evolution. Certainly we should not charge a brother who advocates the Gap Theory with believing in evolution.

But, back to the Coffman CD. In his *Commentary on Mark*, Coffman comments on the miracle of the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mk. 8:22-26). He cites Dummelow who observed that “the man was healed in stages.” Coffman says,

This is a rare case of Jesus' performance of such a wonder in stages... (150)

What are readers of *Truth Magazine* to think when they buy the Coffman CD and read the Open Letter?

R. C. Trench, in his *Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord* (1874), points out the gradual nature of this miracle.

The feature which most distinguishes this miracle is the progressive character of the cure. (384)

Trench also mentions Chrysostom's explanation of the “gradual cure.”

Mark in the Truth Commentaries. The most recent release in the new *Truth Commentaries*, published by the Guardian of Truth Foundation and edited by Mike Willis, is the volume on *Mark* by L. A. Stauffer. Brother Stauffer's comments on Mark 8 evidently did not get to the 61 who signed the Open Letter. Had it done so I am sure they would have informed him that he was denying the miraculous in the Bible. Even the men who are writing this series of commentaries (Dan King wrote the commentary on *John*) are not in agreement on this fundamental point which “faithful brethren” have pointed out as an “obvious” characteristic of miracles. Here is what Stauffer has to say:

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. Again, Bible students know from the gospels as a whole that, with this one exception, Jesus healed people instantly. Again, the why of this exception is not known. The man at this point began to see, but his vision was still distorted. He saw **men as trees, walking** about. Apparently in former days the man had had sight and knew what trees were. Nothing specifically is said about the blind man's faith. The two-step healing process may have been a foretaste of Jesus' power in contrast to his full power as a method of bringing the man either to faith or to fullness of faith. (181)

Can you imagine the confusion in the minds of brethren when they get this material. Guardian of Truth publishes and sells both *Truth Magazine* and the *Truth Commentaries*, both edited by Mike Willis. Who is right? Mike Willis and L. A. Stauffer? Or, the Staff Writers who signed the Open Letter? Connie W. Adams, J. Wiley Adams, Bill Cavender, Larry Hafley, Ron Halbrook, Daniel H. King, Donnie V. Rader, Tom Roberts, Bobby Witherington, Harry Osborne.

I agree that the miracle of Mark 2 was instantaneous and that *most* of the miracles of the Bible are. When the JW's tell us that *nephesh* (soul, Gen. 2:7) means animal life and conclude that soul is nothing more than animal life, we simply cite references where the Hebrew term *nephesh* and the Greek term *psuche* mean more than animal life. There are other examples of miracles recorded in the Bible which were not instantaneous. All of us need to be more careful in our study.

The signers of the Open Letter have built their whole case on a **fallacious argument**. Let me make it clear that I think there is sufficient evidence in Genesis 1 for me to conclude that the “days” are literal, solar days. Many conservative scholars see a problem with concluding that the first three days were 24-hour days because the sun and moon had not been positioned to determine days and seasons. There is good biblical evidence that day 7 may not be a literal 24-hour day. The term *day* (Hebrew *yom*) is used many times in the Bible of a period not to be identified with a 24-hour day. All of these things must be considered as we seriously study this issue. Conservative brethren who hold a strong anti-evolution position have recognized these problems. In a separate article, “The Creation Controversy and Florida College” I have discussed the views of the late W. W. Otey who has been hailed by brethren at a “Contender for the Faith.” You may read the article at <http://bibleworld.com>

Could Truth Magazine Give Away Coffman's CD?

I assume that most of the men who signed the Open Letter believe that Coffman's view on 1 Corinthians 7:15 is false doctrine, as I do. Would it be wrong for the Guardian of Truth Foundation to give away Coffman's CD to its readers? They sometimes give away copies of *Truth Magazine* which is normally sold. Could they give away a copy of *Mark* by L. A. Stauffer and edited by Mike Willis? Could they publish and **sell** (I have paid in advance!) in *Truth Magazine* a copy of the Open Letter which contains this glaring contradiction with the published views of the Foundation? Will it be permissible for the Foundation to **give away** copies of the magazine containing the Open Letter? Or, a copy of *Mark* by Stauffer (edited by Willis)? Which will they reject and condemn? *Truth Magazine* with the Open Letter (at least 10 Staff Writers are signatories and two of them are on the Board of Directors of the GOT Foundation), or *Mark* by Stauffer (edited by Willis)? Would it be wrong for them to allow Hill Roberts to distribute his CD to the readers of *Truth Magazine* (or *Gospel Anchor*) who desire a copy? My, My! The webs we mortals weave.

Could Florida College Sell Hill Robert's CD for \$39.95?

Let's tighten the parallel. If Florida College Bookstore stocked Hill Roberts' CD and charged \$39.95 for it, would that be all right? Brother Robert's might like it. Would it be acceptable for both brother Roberts and the Guardian of Truth bookstores to have rented space in the Publisher's Display at Florida College during the lectures? Could Hill display his CD? Could GOT display Coffman's CD and Stauffer's commentary? Like brother Haile said, “Let's be consistent, brethren. It is “inexcusable” to practice the very thing that you condemn in others (Rom. 2:1).”

Other Advertisements in *Truth Magazine*

In recent issues of *Truth Magazine* I have seen advertisements for the following books:

Ferrell Jenkins, *Introduction to Christian Evidences*. Do you know what he believes? According to the Open Letter he is a compromiser who teaches false doctrine about the days of Genesis and tolerates false doctrine. I think I recall that Jenkins edited the entire series of *Truth In Life* Bible class literature. I suppose the Guardian of Truth Foundation will stop selling that. Maybe not. The ad says he is a “faithful gospel preacher and long time professor at Florida College” who “has tested this material on a daily basis in the classroom.” This book is said to be “excellent for class study.”

The Apostolic Fathers. Wow! That was a motley group. You can find most any doctrine you wish there.

The Present Truth (the 2000 FC Lectures). Several of the signatories of the Open Letter have warned about the direction of this lecture program. Are they willing to specify which lecture they have in mind?

R. C. Foster, *Studies in the Life of Christ*. It is said to contain “Excellent material.” Good enough recommendation for me. If I did not have a copy I might order immediately. Are we to understand that Daniel H. King, Sr. agrees with Chapter 6, “The Virgin Birth” (246-64)?

Edward J. Young. *The Book of Isaiah*. Both Dan King and Tim Haile would have trouble with Young's strong position on Isaiah 7:14ff.

Robert Shank. *Life in the Son*. Ron Halbrook would have lots of trouble with that one.

Homer Hailey. *A Commentary on Job*. Someone might read that, enjoy it, and decide to get more material by Hailey. Maybe *The Divorced and Remarried Who Would Come to God*. Think of the damage that could be done and the souls that might be lost.

Weldon Warnock. *Revelation*. That is in the June 15 issue — same one that also advertises Coffman's CD. Brother Warnock takes the late date for Revelation. Coffman takes the early view. Both views can not be true. If one is true the other is false and leads to a wrong interpretation of Revelation. Dan King certainly doesn't agree with Coffman (see *Overcoming With the Lamb*, FC lectures for 1994). Which are we to believe? Are we not certain about anything anymore?

Foy E. Wallace, Jr. *God's Prophetic Word*. Concerning the age of the earth brother Wallace says, “There is no date and therefore there is no conflict.” He assumes the Gap Theory to be true.

Bert Thompson, Ph.D. *Creation Compromises*. In *Theistic Evolution* Thompson says “the Gap Theory is absolutely false” (173). Yet it is held by Jere E. Frost, presumably James P. Needham, Foy E. Wallace, and many of signatories of the Open Letter.

In addition to the works cited above, I see several advertisements in recent issues of *Truth Magazine* for books on apologetics or evidences written by denominational scholars. Ron Halbrook, in his booklet *Trends Pointing Toward A New Apostasy*, has given a legitimate and needed warning:

Another danger sign is *brethren drinking too deeply and without discernment from sectarian and liberal wells of thought*. That is, they are reading and listening to sectarian and liberal materials and absorbing it into the heart. Now, the Word of God reveals the will of God. We need to fill our hearts and minds with God's Word so that we can know

and do His will. (20)

...*Saturation in sectarian literature and concepts* will lead to more error on marriage and divorce, on grace and unity, on the positive philosophy, and on worldliness. Because sectarian material rarely fights anything like that. So, you see, we saturate our minds with that, and then we get weaker on *this*, and *this*, and *this*. (50)

What About Donations to Guardian of Truth Foundation?

If the Guardian of Truth Foundation, which has received donations from individuals to assist in its work, decided to give away some books, say in the Philippine Islands, would Gene Frost, Maurice Barnett and Tim Haile agree? Maybe send a donation to help?

Where It All Leads

Now, let's use the kind of reasoning I have been seeing lately and see where it leads. I, too, am concerned about where things lead. Let's go back to the Coffman CD. Suppose a person enjoyed the commentaries by Coffman and decided to secure some of the Old Testament volumes. Suppose she/he decided to buy the *Commentary on Genesis*. Here is what one would find about the "days" of Genesis:

Verse 5, And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Although this verse appears to mean that the separation of light and darkness was the same as creating Day and Night, this meaning is not consistent with the appearance of the sun and moon on the fourth day. It is likely that light and darkness in some cosmic sense were divided on the first day.

"And there was evening and there was morning, one day..." This is generally hailed as requiring that the days of Genesis 1 be understood strictly as twenty-four hour periods of time, answering in every way to our days of the week in an ordinary sense; but tremendous words of caution against such a view are thundered from the pages of inspiration. The very basis for calculating days and nights did not appear in this narrative till the fourth day; and that forbids any dogmatic restriction based upon our methods of calculating days and nights. It certainly did not require any twenty-four hours for God to say, "Let there be light"; and our understanding that God's Creation was by fiat, that he spoke the worlds into existence, and that all things appeared instantly upon the Divine word, forbid any notion that Almighty God required a time budget in any of his creative acts. Certainly, we reject any view that puts God to work for uncounted billions of years in the production of that creation which is now visible to man. We find no fault whatever with the view that the "days" here were indeed very brief periods such as our days. For ages, devout souls have taken exactly that view of them; and no one can prove that they were wrong.

However, "days" are surely mentioned here; and before deciding that we know exactly the duration of them, there is a point of wisdom in remembering that God has revealed some things in the Bible which shed a great deal of light upon this very question:

But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:8). For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night (Psalm 90:4). The apostle Paul referred to the entire present dispensation of the grace of God as "the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

There is also another NT passage in Hebrews 4:4-6ff.

For he hath said somewhere of the seventh day on this wise, God rested on the seventh day.... seeing therefore that it remaineth that some should enter thereinto ... let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest (Hebrews 4:4, 6, 11).

Without any doubt whatever, the last of the passage cited above denominates all of the period of time following the sixth day of Creation and reaching all the way to the final Judgment as “the seventh day.” When it is considered that the very same day mentioned here in Genesis and called here the “seventh day.” using the very same word for “day” as was used for the other six days, there appears to be imposed upon us the utmost restraints and caution with reference to any dogmatic postulations about exactly how long any of those days was.

The Bishop of Edinburgh's comment on the above passage from Hebrews is an emphatic statement of what this writer believes the passage means: “From this argument, we must conclude that the seventh day of God's rest, which followed the six days of his work of creation, is not yet completed.”[H. Cotterill, PC, *Genesis*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), p. xxvii.]

“And there was evening and there was morning, one day...” There are many views of what this means. (1) Some see it as the Hebrew method of reckoning days from sunset to sunset, concluding therefore that these were ordinary twenty-four hour days. (2) Cotterill, just quoted, saw their meaning as an implication, that “each day had its beginning and its close.” (3) Others connect the words with progression from darkness to light, a movement upward to higher and higher forms of life in the cycle of creation. (4) A number have viewed this as a reference to “the day” the inspired writer, Moses, was given the vision of God's days of creation, corresponding somewhat to the successive visions of Revelation.

“One day . . .” Significantly, the entire six days of creation are spoken of as a single day in 2:4, “In the day that Jehovah God made earth and heaven.” There are serious objections to receiving any of the “explanations” mentioned above. Any basis for dogmatic assurance concerning exactly what is meant by the days of this chapter has eluded us; and we therefore leave it as one of the “secret things which belong unto Jehovah our God” (Deuteronomy 29:29). There is certainly no impediment to a childlike acceptance of the days of Genesis as ordinary days in exactly the same manner that the first generation to receive this revelation in all probability accepted them, as most of our parents understood them, and as every soul humbled by a consciousness of the phenomenal ignorance of mankind may also find joy in believing and accepting them, fully aware, of course, that there may be, indeed must be, oceans of truth concerning what is revealed here that men shall never know until we see our Savior face to face. (29-31)

What Will *Truth Magazine* Do About This?

Will *Truth Magazine* stop advertising all of these books and CD's? Will they recall *Mark* by Stauffer (edited by Willis) or replace their Staff Writers and Directors who have taken this contradictory view on instantaneous miracles? Like brother Haile said, “Let's be consistent, brethren. It is “inexcusable” to practice the very thing that you condemn in others (Rom. 2:1).”