

Human Creation
by
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It was the best present anyone could give me. My cousin-in-law, Amy sent us memberships to the Zoological Society of San Diego. Somewhere along the line I must have inadvertently mentioned to her how I had been held spellbound by the Kangaroos, mesmerized by the Tasmanian devil and captivated by the antics of the swimming Polar bears. Although I had been there only once, it immediately became one of my favorite places.

My wife, a natural horse whisperer was as anxious as I was to find our way to San Diego and to make use of our memberships. We couldn't wait to jump in the flat bed truck and mix with the critters on the African Safari.

Thus a couple weeks ago I found myself on a plane en route to San Diego via the Grand Canyon and the red rock of Sedona to be with the animals. Since I enjoy reading magazines on a plane, I loaded up with the latest popular news magazines as we went on board.

In no time, the plane took off and visions of Dr. Doolittle danced in my head. As I pushed my seat back and began reading my magazines, I was confounded by several articles debating creation vs. evolution. I could never quite understand this conflict and the articles only served to make creationist Christians look rather obtuse. Whether God chose to create the human race in one flash or over a billion years has never been a source of confusion for me. I have always had far greater obstacles to overcome like loving my neighbor, let alone forgiving my enemies.

I have found good science and theology to be complimentary but something profound was missing in this evolution debate. Although I didn't subscribe to the creationist view, there was a subtle irreverent tone being expressed by the quoted evolutionists. However, I couldn't quite put my finger on what was troubling me.

The plane landed and we were soon on our way to the zoo. My wife and I were euphoric feeding biscuits right out of our hands to the towering giraffes while we stood up in the truck. But we were totally out of control when monstrous rhinos came up to us begging for apples. "Snap this picture while I bravely grab his horn," I gleefully said to my wife. "No one back home will ever believe this," I chirped. The surprisingly docile rhinos were an absolute delight.

A little later when we walked over to the lemur area, there was a sign that told of their different habits. But somewhere in the middle of the sign something caused me to reread over and over again. It mentioned rather matter-of-factly that lemurs were primates just

like us. It stopped me in my tracks because I immediately recognized what was troubling me on the plane.

By whatever means God chose, I have always believed that human beings were created in the likeness and image of God. We might have a connection to the lemur but more importantly we have a soul, that special gift that communes with God. The lemur sign failed to include this and I suddenly felt a twinge of dissatisfaction in paradise. And here's why:

This particular zoo plays an important stewardship role in propagating some of the earth's rarest creatures like the Panda. What is it within us primates that would cause us to perform a wonderful service like this? A larger brain? I would suggest it is that unique spiritual dimension that keeps us preserving helpless creatures like Koala bears.

Yes we are different from the lemurs. And the evolutionary philosophy of humankind is as dysfunctional as the lemur sign if it ignores the spiritual component. The residents of the San Diego Zoo owe their existence to the fact that we have been imbued with a soul. Otherwise they might all be lunch.

The creation vs. evolution debate would be far better served by focusing on the real issue, the sanctity of human life. It's excellent science to explore how we came to be. It's wonderful faith to love what we are. Good science and good theology should be viewed as integral partners as we hang out upside down with the lemurs.



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