**A Creation Story for Our Times**

Ted Burke

The Big Bang and subsequent physical and biological evolution are

firmly established beliefs in the minds of nearly all scientists. When set

side by side with the story of creation in Genesis, they appear to give

a more convincing account of the material creation. But the two accounts

have different purposes. The scientific one, of course, makes no mention

of God. Genesis, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with the divine

truths of God and creation and God’s relation to humankind.

Those parts of Genesis that reveal primitive ideas about the material

aspects of creation can be revised without disturbing most of those divine

truths. We have much evidence in the Bible of the evolution of the

concept of God, particularly in the Old Testament, but belief in him as

Creator and our dependence on him remain firm and unchanged.

In the light of our present scientific knowledge and of subsequent

events in history, perhaps the writers of Genesis, inspired by God’s continuing

revelation of himself, would have written something like this:

In the beginning, God said ‘Let there be . . . ,’ and he created the unified

forces of physics, with perfect symmetry and prescient precision. And

out of nothing, and into nothing, God, by a free decision, set up the

spontaneous production of particles, in newborn space and time, producing

a silent, seething sphere, infinitesimally small and unimaginably

hot. There was onset and evolution, the first stage of creation.

During a tiny fraction of a second, an expansion took place, and the

perfect symmetry of the forces was broken, step by step, as the temperature

dropped, to produce the forces of nature we know today.

God’s well-tuned laws made innumerable particles, of every requisite

kind, in a steadily expanding chaotic cooling sphere. And the universe

cooled for nearly a million years, until electrons could stay joined to nuclei to form familiar atoms. There was onset and evolution, the second stage of creation.

With atoms and molecules as building blocks, the attracting force of

gravity took over, and after about a thousand million years, God saw the

First stars and galaxies forming in an expanding cosmic universe. There

was onset and evolution, the third stage of creation.

Individual stars contracted under gravity and became hot enough for

nuclear fusion to produce chemical elements not seen before, until, after

about ten thousand million years, stars were exhausted by their

radiance, and God saw them begin to die, some dramatically, by exploding

as supernovas, releasing all the known chemical elements. There

was onset and evolution, the fourth stage of creation.

And God saw that it was very good, for now all the ingredients were

available, and gravity formed a second generation of stars, some accompanied

by planets and satellites, including the Sun, Earth, and, later, the

Moon, in our galaxy of the Milky Way. There was onset and evolution, the

Fifth stage of creation.

Bathed in alternate daylight and darkness, during the next thousand

million years or so, conditions on Earth became favorable for the eventual

generation of life. There was onset and evolution, the sixth stage of

creation.

During these last three thousand million years, life has evolved as

God intended, and through numerous cycles of birth, survival, procreation,

and death, species have multiplied and progressed, plants and

animals of every kind, and some have become extinct, until, a mere three

hundred thousand years ago, there arrived, in the likeness of God, *Homo*

*sapiens,* intelligent humans, with freedom to choose, living together in

community, knowing good and evil, pleasure and pain, aware of honor due to their dominion, and acquainted with death. There was onset and evolution, the seventh stage of creation.

And the universe entered the Age of Humanity. Human beings have

hardly changed in physical form during the past forty thousand years,

but their beliefs have evolved, their knowledge has grown, and their understanding

has deepened.

And God saw that it was good, but it was not good enough, for free

will led to sin and suffering, and guilt and disbelief could lead to despair

and the death of the human spirit.

So God sent his only Son, the Word made ßesh, who dwelt among us

as Jesus of Nazareth, suffered, died, and rose from the dead, and showed

his glory, full of grace and truth.

And that was the beginning of the new creation.

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