

Fossils and Faith: Finding Our Way Through the Creation Controversy

by Thea Nyhoff Leunk.

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This four-session course written by Rev. Thea Leunk is meant for high school students in grades eleven and twelve or young adults in either a day or a church-school setting. The students are encouraged to explore how Christians have come to reconcile apparent disagreements with the issues related to the current debate between scientific and Biblical views of creation. They receive a newspaper for each session to give them information for a more in-depth discussion. The newspaper offers a summary description, not detailed accounts, of the issues involved. Leunk asserts that the latter are presented in a "Reformed, Protestant" context. But she adds that not one position has been selected as the "best" or "most faithful" answer. Instead, her course presents a full range of various positions that Christians have articulated. She claims, "No one position should be assumed to be more biblically correct than another." She also states that the first chapters of Genesis are not meant to be scientific works or even detailed historical accounts. I find her view of Scripture troubling. For example, she says that strong evidence suggests that the original texts recorded in the Pentateuch, the first five Bible books, were edited several times during Israel's history, most recently in the years following the exile of Judah in Babylon (586 BC).

Leunk's course tends to focus more on the environment and how to preserve the earth - how important that may be - than on exposing the students to the spiritual dangers of evolutionism. For example, she asks, "How do you weigh the global environmental crisis about global human suffering? What can or should churches or synagogues do about the threat to the environment? What can the individual do?" And "on a scale of 1-10, how responsibly do we act for the well-being of the earth?"

The course, *Fossils and Faith: Finding One's Way Through the Creation Controversy* seems to leave it up to the students to choose which view of the beginnings of the world they want to adopt as their own. But the church is not a religious debating club. The church is called upon to instruct the covenant youth how to approach creation-science debate from a Biblically formed worldview. In the spiritual struggles of our times, our weapons are still the inerrant Scripture and our confessions. They cannot be replaced by an outside agenda such as science or the desire to make things fit the latest scientific theory. The creation event in Genesis took place as described before Israel existed. The Genesis record of creation is given so that we might have a true account of the world in which we live, of its divine author and our place in it. We would not have any idea how the world began without revelation on God's part. It is essential to view the first chapters of Genesis completely as history – just as much so as records concerning Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, or Jesus Christ. Beginning with Genesis 1, the Bible unfolds the drama of God's action in history. What would I do with Leunk's course if I were still an active pastor in a congregation? I would not use it to instruct the youth.

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