

Earth and Heaven – Geology and Theology
Sopron, Liszt Ferenc Conference and Cultural Centre
16-18 October, 2008
Conference Report

Overview

2008 is the **International Year of Planet Earth**, and in Hungary also the **Year of Bible**. It seemed reasonable, however unconventional, to link these two aspects. The idea was brought up by geoscientists, embraced by IYPE NC for Hungary, and was remarkably well received by the theologians of the so-called “historical” Churches in Hungary. High patronage was granted by Cardinal *P. Erdő*, Archbishop of Esztergom and Budapest and *J. Pálincás*, President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Topics

As a joint venture, a three-day conference was arranged in the West Hungarian town Sopron, with an exceptionally rich Exhibition of various translations and editions of the Bible. Among the lecturers there were more scientists than theologians (13:7). Each of them was given 15 minutes. What did they talk about?

The Theologians

History of Religion – without relation with the Earth Sciences

1. The Heaven in the world concept of the Ancient Orient (*I. Karasszon*), Calvinist G. Károli University)
2. Development of the Canon of the New Testament (*P. Balla*, Calvinist G. Károli University)

Creation and Evolution

3. The Story of Creation in the Book of Genesis – hidden aspects (*J. Zsengellér*, Calvinist Pápa Academy of Theology)
4. Hominization and cooperation – not only struggle for life (*I. Sipos* SJP, biologist)
5. Positive Christian interpretation of evolution (*P. Bolberitz*, P. Pázmány Catholic University, President of St. Stephen Academy)

Earth and Heaven in the Literature

6. A Selection of Poetry and Prose (*R. Korzenszky* OSB, Prior of Tihany Abbey)

Apocalypse – End and Beginning

7. A New Heaven and a New Earth in the Book of Revelations (*G. Vladár*, Rector of Calvinist Pápa Academy of Theology)

The Geoscientists

Comprehensive topics

8. Science – Pseudoscience, Religion – Pseudoreligion (*L. Szarka*, geophysicist)
9. Geology and Theology – according to O. Prohászka – in 1902 (*E. Dudich*, geologist)
10. Interrelation of Earth and Heaven in the Cultural History of Mankind (*Sz. Bérczi*, astronomer)

Earth Science and Society

11. The role of the International Year of the Planet Earth (K. Brezsnyánszky, geologist, Chair of IYPE NC for Hungary)
12. The fate of fertile soil (T. Németh, agrochemist, Secretary General of Hung. Acad. Sci.)

On some part(s) of the Bible

13. The principle of actualism in the Predicator's Book (I. Viczián, geologist)
14. Job 28 about the earth (Z. Unger, geomathematician)
15. Creationism, deluge or scientific evolutionism? (J. Kókay, geologist)
16. Some geological interpretations: deluge, passing of the Red Sea, disclosing water (Gy. Vitális, hydrogeologist)
17. The limits of human cognition (T. Zelenka, geologist)
18. The world view of apostle Peter (T. Madarász, geologist)
19. Medicaments from the earth in the Bible (J. Lipták, pharmacologist)
20. The salt of the earth (M. Nagy, chemist)

The presentations were discussed at a round-table by three theologians: P. Bolberitz, G. Krámer (Lutherian Church), I. Szabó (Calvinist Church), and four scientists: K. Brezsnyánszky, E. Dudich, G. Náray-Szabó (o. m., Hung. Acad. Sci.), L. Szarka.

Message

Nobody stated antagonistic contradiction between Science and Christian religion. However, there are contradictions between science and pseudosciences, and between religions and pseudoreligions. Science (and only science) is able to give reliable knowledge how Nature works, and the investigation of the "ultimate Why", the "Primordial Cause", should be left to Religion (and Philosophy, linking Science and Religion). The aggressive form of atheism and the aggressive creationism were both rejected as extreme views. The main message of the conference is in perfect accordance with the views of overseas scientists: „*Science and religion are different ways of understanding the world. Needlessly placing them in opposition reduces the potential of each to contribute to a better future.*” (Cicerone R. J., Fineberg H. V., Ayala F. J.: Preface: Science, Evolution and Creationism. The National Academies Press, Washington, 2008)

This message is worth keeping in mind in the coming Darwin year (2009), when not only the evolutionism, but also Earth's history might be again stages of useless Creationist-Atheist war.

E. Dudich
(Honorary President of the Philosophical Circle)
L. Szarka
(Secretary of IYPE NC for Hungary)