

RESOLUTION REGARDING A SCIENTIFICALLY RIGOROUS AFFIRMATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST BELIEFS REGARDING CREATION

Whereas, La Sierra University (“LSU”) is a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher education that is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges; and

Whereas, LSU, by its mission and its accreditation, is committed to preparing well-rounded students who have a solid foundation in the Seventh-day Adventist faith, beliefs, and practices, who have critical thinking skills, and have a thorough and rigorous education in their fields of study. This includes in-depth understanding of the data, assumptions, theorems, conclusions, and criticism that represent current mainstream thought in their academic disciplines; and

Whereas, LSU faculty and administration are expected to provide personal support and guidance to students in matters of faith and learning, including challenges to their religious beliefs arising from the subject matter within their chosen disciplines; and

Whereas, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has sponsored three international conferences on Faith and Science from 2002 to 2004 that resulted in an “Affirmation of Creation” document; and

Whereas, the General Conference issued an official Response to the “Affirmation of Creation” document that was drafted and voted by the General Conference Executive Committee. Point 4 of this “Response” reads as follows (underlining added for emphasis):

4. *We call on all boards and educators at Seventh-day Adventist institutions at all levels to continue upholding and advocating the church’s position on origins. We, along with Seventh-day Adventist parents, expect students to receive a thorough, balanced, and scientifically rigorous exposure to and affirmation of our historic belief in a literal, recent six-day creation, even as they are educated to understand and assess competing philosophies of origins that dominate scientific discussion in the contemporary world.*

and;

Whereas, the LSU Board believes that it would be appropriate and advantageous for Adventist higher education to develop a curriculum that specifically includes “a scientifically rigorous...affirmation of our historic belief in a literal, recent six-day creation.”

Therefore, the LSU Board resolves to:

1. Request the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities to convene a Study Group consisting of the president and two science faculty members from each of the Adventist colleges and universities in the North American Division, two representatives from the Geoscience Research Institute, and two representatives from the General Conference Department of Education. Their mission would be to study, discuss, and

develop a proposal for a college curriculum fulfilling the General Conference Executive Committee's call for a thorough, balanced, and scientifically rigorous affirmation of the Adventist Church's historic belief in a literal, recent six-day creation; and

2. Request the Study Group to obtain assistance from the Geoscience Research Institute in the form of two model course outlines—one each in the life and earth sciences. The goal would be for the outlines, and the scientific literature cited in them, to constitute the scientifically rigorous evidence in support of Adventist belief in a literal, recent six-day creation. Such course outlines could then inform curricular revision throughout Adventist higher education.
3. Request that research be undertaken to study the spiritual development of students in Adventist colleges and universities, with special attention to students in the sciences. This research would be coordinated by LSU's John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry, in association with the North American Division Office of Education and a qualified faculty research team. This research recommendation is based on the Board's support of the sacred obligation to teach students Seventh-day Adventist beliefs in a manner contributing to a mature, enduring faith that is integrated with a thorough preparation in the sciences.

The Board of Trustees adopts this resolution at its meeting of November 12, 2009 and authorizes the LSU President to convey the request and recommendations of this resolution to the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities.