



A publication of the North American Division for Evangelism and Outreach
Volume 20, May 11, 2011

Share and Care

**Evangelism is hard work!
You have to do a lot of things right to get a response,
but it is an altogether satisfying work.
The hardest job you'll ever love!**

-- Ron Clouzet

Now that *In the Beginning: Making Sense of the Creation Evolution Debate* is over. Host sites are looking at the experience and evaluating whether the series accomplished what they expected it would. Co-host Ron Clouzet has done the same. He has written it based on reports received and his own experience at the live uplink site, Nashville, Tennessee.

Clouzet Assesses Creation-Evolution Series



Campus Seventh-day Adventist Church, Nashville,
Prophecies Decoded uplink site

Some 675 churches plus countless homes all over North America tuned in to *In the Beginning: Making Sense of the Creation-Evolution Debate* broadcasted live on Hope Channel from Nashville, May 4 to 8. The 90-minute, five-night program was well received by many throughout the Division, as indicated by dozens of e-mails received from all over its territory.

For example, in Ronan, Montana, average attendance was 85 people with 60% of them being guests, including a number of Amish. In Tucson, Arizona, a church averaged 40 people and 10 guests in attendance. In Hot Springs, Arkansas, they averaged 60 people, including five guests. In Surrey, British Columbia, 80% of the attendees were guests!

Since there is no precedence for a meeting of this nature in the church (except for occasional, local creation seminars here and there), we didn't know what to expect regarding interest and/or attendance. However, there are a few things we have learned, so far.

1. Attendance was less than expected compared to prophecy meetings. We suspect this would change if held in public halls instead of a church.
2. Churches that invited people personally over direct-mail did consistently better with their attendance. Handbills, however, may be an important complement.
3. This topic is reaching a demographic never reached before. In Nashville, many of the guests had strong scientific backgrounds and were well read and educated.
4. In Nashville, again the live site, three fourths of the guest attendance had Christian backgrounds while one fourth had a largely secular background.
5. Offering resources on the subject (DVDs, books, etc.), was very important. Many in the local site took advantage of the materials we had for sale.
6. For some, the content was a little challenging to digest, due to lack of familiarity with scientific language or issues.
7. An overwhelming majority of the Nashville attendees were extremely happy with the presentations, considering them to be very valuable, eager to share them with others.
8. Most of those who attended said they'd want to attend the archaeology meetings and even the prophecy meetings coming up.
9. Evangelism is hard work: you have to do a lot of things right to get a response, but it is an altogether satisfying work. The hardest job you'll ever love!
10. This topic is very challenging to do only in five 90-minute long nights, but many more things went well over those that didn't. God is opening a new door.

The Adventist Church is charged to give the Three Angels' Message to the whole world. But even the Christian world is now under the spell of a naturalistic worldview to the point that the existence of God, His Sabbath, Calvary, and other issues become meaningless for people, unless they recognize we owe everything to our Creator and Redeemer. These issues are increasingly important for us to deal with and offer a truly biblical worldview alternative.

One night, I was talking with three thirty-something guests. They were impressed with the presentation, but one of them made it personal. "I finished with a physics degree," he shared with me, "but grew up, basically, as a Christian. I've had questions all my life about some of these things, and tonight, I got some answers. Thank you. I'll be back."

--Ron Clouzet
Seminar co-host
Director, North American Division Evangelism Institute

View reports at: <http://host.propheciesdecoded.com/creation-evolution-recap>.

It is our privilege to experiment with new ways to REACH out. Thank you for your reports. We can learn from one another's experiences.

Comments and evaluations from host sites

Omaha, Nebraska: We had an average of 15 visitors from the community. Some came for the entire series. We had 15-20 members but their attendance dwindled to about 5-7 by the last evening. Our visitors were very friendly, thought our church was very nice, enjoyed our refreshments and thought the speakers were knowledgeable. But some attending thought the speakers were too general and still others thought it was information overload.

Milton-Freewater, Oregon: Thursday evening we jumped from 13 people the night before to 30! Not only did we have more Adventists but we got a real surprise! An undergraduate class from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, attended along with their professor, a PhD in Evolutionary Biology. The class is studying evolutionary biology this quarter so came to hear the topic, *The Life of Creatures*.

SW Kansas district: First night attendance was very good, yet there was a drastic decline for the second night. I attributed that to the first-night format. As a result many people were confused, perhaps even believing that the Adventist church may be leaning towards evolution, and as a result, some got up and left. I thought the last four nights were much clearer. Overall I thought the presentations were of excellent quality and were probably effective with the audience they were designed to reach—the higher-educated, non-churched. The Salvation Army brought their youth group of about 20 on the 1st night.

Nashville, Tennessee: We had a full house opening night in Nashville, about 500 present. There appeared to be a positive response to the presentations.

Lincoln, Nebraska: The pastor held the seminar in his home. Five attended each night but they were different people. As a follow-up the pastor is starting a weekly Bible study using video format followed by discussion. One visitor and one former Adventist are committed to the group.

Chadron, Nebraska: We had four visitors and about 10 members the first night. One older member didn't like it all and wouldn't even take the book by Dwight Nelson. An elderly lady visitor came three nights but lives quite a ways out in the country. Our own people thought the evolution was too deep and too much emphasis on it and so dropped away as time went on. There were only four of us there last night...one running the equipment, his wife and a visitor that came every night and thoroughly enjoyed it, who is a non-attending Adventist, plus myself. Members thought 90 minutes was too long.

Milton-Freewater, Oregon: I came home very, very proud of the work you are doing. I know just enough about science to often be embarrassed by Creationist efforts to “defend the faith”. You did not embarrass me in the least! I sensed that both your educational credentials and your well-researched, well-illustrated history of Darwinian evolution and the biochemical evidences for complexity and your friendly humility towards those of another worldview were perfect for our guests. --pastor

Summary:

Some of you have taken time to send valuable feedback from members and guests that attended the Creation-Evolution seminar. It's interesting to read the comments for some reports directly refute what another host site might report. These direct opposites may be telling us something that we all know and believe—it is difficult to satisfy everyone at the same time because we all come from different places in

our journey, have been exposed to different environments, like different things, and enjoy a variety of hobbies, and even discussion topics.

It seems that many of the guests who came fit the targeted audience—Christians of all faiths who are confused by the Creation verses evolution debate and want to better understand these deep and challenging issues. It was also designed to appeal to the scientific-minded person who is honest at heart and open to learning biblical truth. It is our privilege and our duty as a church family to offer a variety of events in the community, not because “we like them” and “it’s good for me” but because it may attract someone who could not be reached any other way.

Subscribe to *REACH North America News*

REACH North America News is a must for pastors, elders, church leadership and anyone who has a passion for outreach and evangelism. If your church friends and leadership are not getting this valuable newsletter, invite them to subscribe by emailing NETCoordinator@nad.adventist.org.

***REACH North America News* is archived weekly on the AdventSource website, www.AdventSource.org.** Search for “Reach” to find the newsletters.